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MARVEL

Year-in-Review '92

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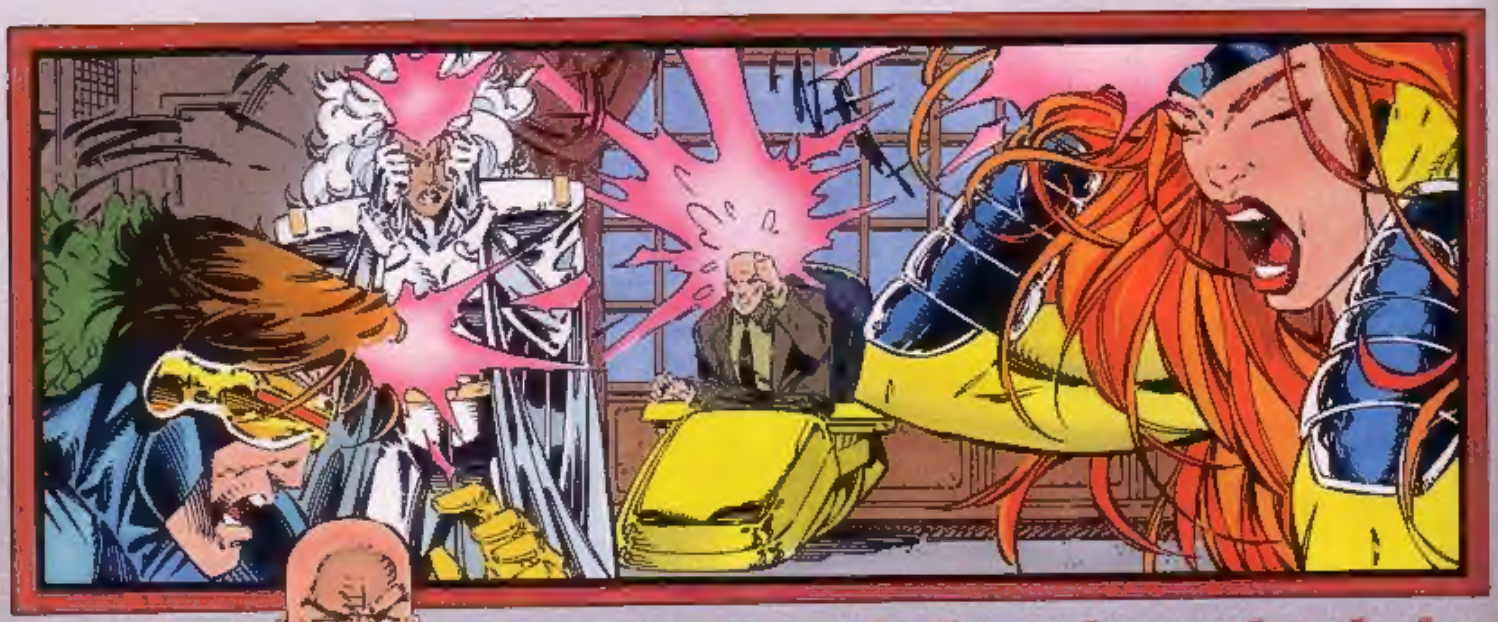
SCATHING SELF-SATIRE!

Why is the Punisher So Cool?

OR:
"Hey, Didn't This Guy Used to Shoot Jaywalkers?"

Plus: Tony Stark's Spleen • What About Ant-Man? • I Married A Skrull

"It was a throbbing, psionic pain that just wouldn't go away..."



"... and when *I* have a headache, I'm not the only one who suffers."

"I mean, here I am, Professor Charles Xavier, helpless in the grips of a migraine. I've fought off invasions from outer space and parallel dimensions, gone brain-to-toe with supernatural menaces and evil mutants bent on world domination ... why, I've saved the Earth more times than most people change socks.

"But I realized that this time, I was going to need some help.

"I had a headache the size of Asteriod M, but I took two X-Cederin and now it's gone."

X-Cederin.
If it can cure Professor X, imagine what it will do for you

B L A T H E R

From the Editor

So I'm talking with my Good Twin a few months back, and he's whining about this new assignment he's editing called *Marvel 1992 — The Year in Review*. He says it's a news magazine set in the Marvel Universe, it's a huge project, how's he ever going to get it done, blah blah blah.

"Okay, look, you've been working hard enough lately," I told him. "I'll stand in for you. Just sit back and let me handle everything."

"Yeah, that sounds good," he whined (he whines a lot), "but you're my Evil Twin, man. I mean, how can I trust you to —"

"*Not-So-Nice* Twin," I corrected, patiently and innocently waiting for his answer. He thought about it for a minute, twitching nervously.

And then the idiot agreed to it.

Which was great, 'cause that meant I could do anything I wanted with the magazine, and *he'd* be the one who got fired.

Okay, so first thing I did was change the name to *Marvel Year-In-Review '92*. Snappy, it rhymes, you know?

Next I had a little chat with Bobbie Chase's Not-Nice-At-All Twin, and she agreed that the magazine shouldn't pull any punches — and that it should, in fact, be as viciously satirical as possible. (The Good Twin Bobbie Chase seemed to have doubts, but we … *convinced* her to back off.)

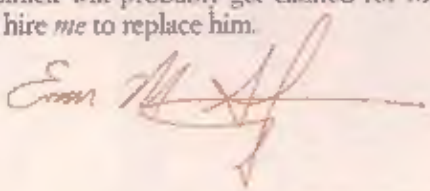
After all, the super heroes and villains get to be cool all year long. At the end of the year, I think they should get a good flogging. Keeps 'em in line, you know? I mean, all we need is for *them* to run off and form *their* own company …

Anyway, after I decided on format, the rest was a cakewalk. Making threatening phone calls to John Romita, Jr. … slapping bigshot X-FORCE writer Fabian Nicieza into pathetic, pleading submission … downloading the entire contents of Peter Sanderson's brain … sending interns on "artwork quests" which I hoped would lead to death or horrible injury … returning manuscripts unread to Tom Brevoort and asking him to remove the faint pizza-burger aroma … shining a 300-watt desk lamp off the top of my head in order to blind other Marvel editors as they vainly tried to protect their characters … packing so much material into 48 pages that tens of thousands of readers will need new glasses … spiking my magazine designer's coffee with No-Doz … reassuring Stan Lee that this abomination would never see print …

Ahh, it's been a joyride, really.

So if we missed picking on anybody in these pages, let me know. We'll get 'em next year. Yeah, yeah, I know I said Skolnick will probably get canned for *Marvel Year-In-Review '92* … but hey, maybe they'll hire *me* to replace him.

See you in 365 …



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Letters to the Editor should be addressed to: MARVEL COMICS, Marvel Year-In-Review '92, 387 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10016. They should include the letter-writer's full name, address and home telephone number. Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity or space — or just to reflect a viewpoint that we'd rather you had, usually to fulfill our deep-rooted need for acceptance and love.

MYIR

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1992

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SportSkins™

The close-fitting, comfortable workout gear that fits you perfectly ... no matter what shape you're in.

SPIDER-MAN 30th ANNIVERSARY

What About Ant-Man?

A short talk with a small-time hero with big ambitions ...

In a quiet rural area of Englewood, California stands a quaint, unassuming building: the home and workshop of semi-retired super hero Henry Pym. The product of a generation that produced such luminaries as Iron Man, Thor, the Hulk and, of course, Spider-Man, Pym remains the one truly notable Marvel failure. Several new costume designs and power revamps have done little to bolster his flagging popularity. His identities are less than legend (Ant-Man, Giant Man, Yellowjacket, etc.), though many of them have since been adopted by other more successful heroes and villains. Alas, Henry Pym is not so much a has-been as a never-was.

Overlooked in the wake of Spider-Man's thirtieth anniversary is the fact that Pym's crime-fighting career, likewise, is three decades old. We were the only magazine to stop by and chat with Henry about this major milestone, a fact apparently not lost on the Ant-Sized Avenger.

HP: I suppose it's understandable that I was overlooked — I'm only six inches tall, after all. But even so, is a little recognition too much to ask? Maybe a limited series? Ant-Man Masterworks?

MYIR: Maybe someday, Mr. Pym. Now, let's start with a little background. After your first adventure, you promised you'd never knowingly harm an ant — are you effectively a Hindu now?

HP: No, not really. I'm just very careful about where I walk.

MYIR: We've often wondered — when you first teamed up with your former wife Janet Van Dyne, you gave her powers even greater than your own. What possessed you?

HP: The truth? Most of that stuff was untested. She had been orphaned, so I figured if something went wrong, who'd know? I wasn't about to be my own guinea pig again — I mean, look how badly it worked out the first time.

MYIR: That's interesting. Does it bother you that Spider-Man's thirtieth year of crime-fighting received such a media blitz, while yours —

HP: Yeah, okay, fine. Just remember, I was the progenitor of the "insect super hero" motif, not Spider-Man. People are always trying to compare us. That's one of the reasons I moved to the West Coast — to avoid comparisons. Then Spider-Woman showed up, and —

MYIR: You shouldn't worry too much about comparisons, Dr. Pym. No one would ever mistake you for Spider-Man.

HP: What's that supposed to mean?

MYIR: Incidentally, spiders aren't really insects. They're arachnids.

HP: I know that! I *am* a brilliant scientist, you know! But it's a very fine line, a hair's breadth. They both have lots of legs. And how many comic book readers knew the difference in 1962?

MYIR: That's a good question. Exactly how do your powers differ from those of Spider-Man?

HP: The inevitable comparison. All right, well, for starters, I can compress my body to ant size.

MYIR: Very impressive. But you can still get squashed, right?

HP: Well ... yeah.

MYIR: What else can you do?

HP: I can control the ants. Let's see Spider-Man do that — he can't even control spiders! I heard that Spielberg called him up when he was filming *Arachnophobia*, and asked him —

MYIR: An ant saved your life once, right?

HP: Many times.

MYIR: And so you repay them — by bossing them around?

HP: Now hold on a second —

MYIR: Bet that makes you feel pretty big, doesn't it?

HP: First of all, ants are very cooperative. They *like* to help out. Secondly, they don't live very long — what's a few days more or less?

MYIR: Sounds like you treat them as second-class citizens.

HP: So who asked you? The ants like it just fine! Just ask 'em!

MYIR: Right. Anyway, back to Spider-Man —

HP: Spider-Man again? It's always Spider-Man! Spider-Man this and Spider-Man that — I wonder how he'd like waking up in a bed full of red army ants —

MYIR: — why do you think he's been so successful?

HP: What are you asking me for? Don't you think if I knew his secret I'd have done something about myself? Maybe it's his semi-outlaw status — women love a man who's dangerous — or the fact that he keeps such a high profile. That's pretty hard to do when you're only six inches tall.

Right from the start, he was Stan's fair-haired boy — he got all the breaks. He premiered in a magazine called AMAZING FANTASY. Conjures up all kinds of images, doesn't it? Meanwhile, I was saddled with a slot in TALES TO ASTONISH. As in, "It's astonishing that a guy can be so small without getting stepped on!" Well I got stepped on, all right — I didn't even get the whole book! It was like a vote of no-confidence. When I think of what I could have done with those extra pages …

Spidey got his own title immediately. Rumor at the time was he had some photos of Stan with the boss's wife. And there I was, struggling along, going up against guys like Comrade X and Egghead and … that big red bug, what was his name … ?

MYIR: The Scarlet Beetle?

HP: Yeah! That was him! What a turkey! This was the best they could do for me, pest control problems? I mean, Spidey fought his share of losers, too, but I'd have given my eyeteeth to take on someone like Doctor Octopus or the Sandman.

MYIR: Ha! They'd have squashed you like a —

HP: *Don't* say it. Anyway, about a year after I started, Stan came to see me. He said, "There are going to be some changes made, Henry, but don't worry, we have big things planned for you. *Big* things!" I didn't realize he meant that literally.

MYIR: You're referring to your stint as Giant Man?

HP: The only thing more embarrassing than being unsuccessful and tiny is being incompetent and huge! I never really got used to that giant stuff, and when *I* tripped up, *everybody* knew it. At least as Ant-Man I could sweep my mistakes under the rug and nobody'd notice. As Giant Man, I would've had to sweep them under a medium-sized city.

MYIR: So that didn't work out for you either, huh?

HP: Oh, it worked out all right — it worked me right out of the book! They canned me!

MYIR: What happened after that?

HP: Every five minutes someone would come up with a new concept for me, a new spin. It kept throwing off my timing, you know? New costume this week, stuck at giant size that week, new identity as Yellowjacket the week after — I never got the chance to let the real me shine through!

MYIR: What would you say was the nadir of your career, the thing that did you in?

HP: Rub it in, why don't you? Ahh … there are so many candidates, it's hard to pick just one. I guess it kinda hurt that an ex-con using my old Ant-Man rig could be more successful than I had been [Scott Lang, the current Ant-Man] … and that period in the early Seventies when I was trapped at ant size and carried a rusty nail to use as a weapon didn't help any, either … but I'd have to say the thing that really did me in was [*Saturday Night Live's*] Garrett Morris.

MYIR: "I can shrink myself down …"

HP: "… to the size of an ant, while retaining my full human strength." Yeah, yeah. Do you know how sick I am of hearing that? Sixteen years later and still people stop me on the street and go, "Whoo! Full human strength, huh? Every molecule's quiverin' now!!" Then they ask me what John Belushi was like.

MYIR: What was John Belushi like?

HP: *How should I know?!* I never met the man! Why don't you go ask Spider-Man? *He* got to team up with Belushi!

I took Morris to court over the whole affair, but didn't get much satisfaction — he's almost as big a nobody as I am.

MYIR: Well, let's get back to Spider-Man. How do you feel about his enormous success?

HP: *Again* with Spider-Man! Well, it's hard to hate the guy after all the good he's done, but it really burns me sometimes. He has more titles than I have changes of costume. He's everywhere! And yet people still think of him as the hard luck hero. Hard luck, my patootie! He's married to a model, fer Pete's sake! It was trying to compete with him that drove me to my nervous breakdown.

MYIR: Do you have any last words of advice for the wall-crawler?

HP: If I were him, I'd sock away some dough while I was still hot. You never know when things might take a turn for the worse. I'm living proof of that.

— Tom Brevoort and Mike Kanterovich

"Hey! What Happened to my Camera?"

Paparazzi of the Powerful Prepare for Peril

You're a top-notch freelance photographer and you're desperate. You haven't worked for months in your specialty since they blackballed you for fraud, and you need anything you can get to make your reputation back. You slide into the editor's office with a grin that quickly fades as you flip through the file he hands you of available photographs of the subject. "We really need some new shots," he says, trying to sound casual. "He's been going through a lot of changes lately."

Who hasn't? you think grimly, fumbling for a cigarette, some gum, anything to take the edge off. You begin figuring vital statistics such as maximum possible distance from subject, how many pictures you can take in 2.5 seconds with your fastest camera, how fast you can aim and shoot while running in the other direction, the possibility of another outright fakery, etc. as you hear yourself say, with a noticeable crack in your voice, "So where am I headed?"

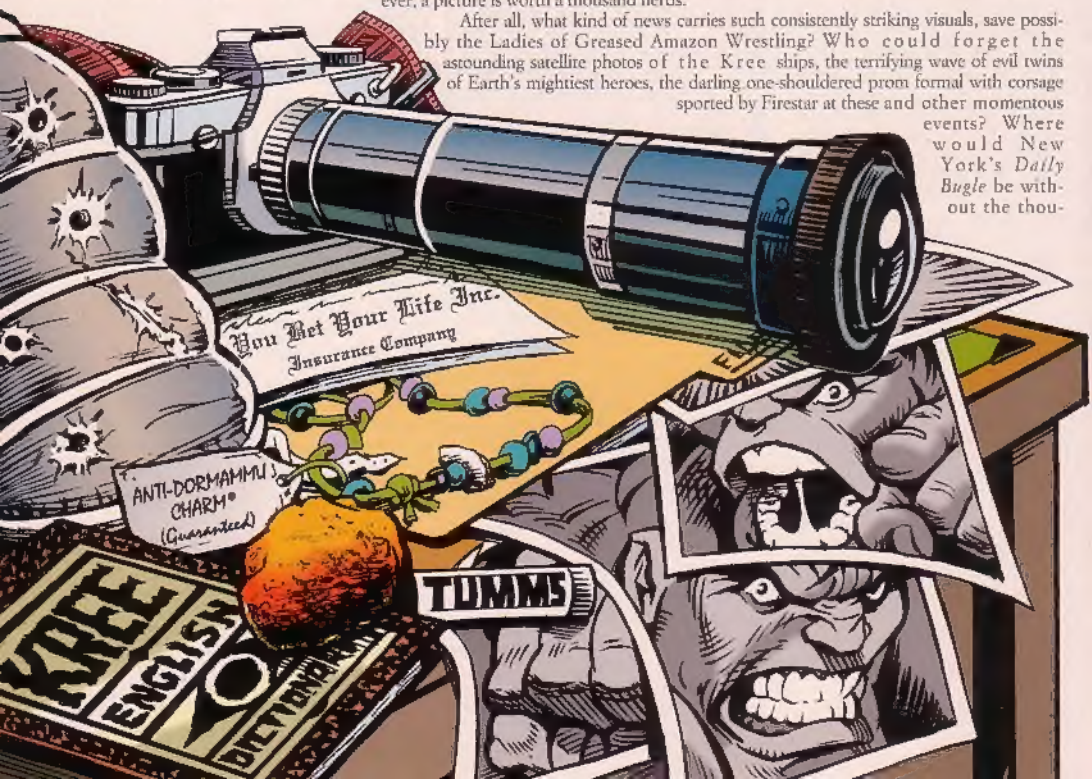
"California. He was spotted with an old friend. And, uh, Dan? We have some special ... forms that Legal needs you to fill out. Could you see the receptionist before you go?"

"Sure." Insurance. He doesn't need to say it.

You stumble jerkily towards the door and to the secretary, sign some unreadable block of text and leave 20 minutes later with a plane ticket in your hand. You now have three days to find, photograph and escape from the Incredible Hulk.

For an increasing number of today's top photogs, variations of the above scenario are just part of their everyday schedule. Once a curiosity fit only for the *Rational Inquiring Midnight Globe*, the media demand for super heroes has exploded with such high-profile events as Operation: Galactic Storm, the Infinity Wars, and Namorita's Atlantean Debutante Ball. Yes, as super heroes continue to increasingly bask in the media spotlight, even the most mundane or annoying bit of news becomes worthy, and, as ever, a picture is worth a thousand nerds.

After all, what kind of news carries such consistently striking visuals, save possibly the Ladies of Greased Amazon Wrestling? Who could forget the astounding satellite photos of the Kree ships, the terrifying wave of evil twins of Earth's mightiest heroes, the darling one-shouldered prom formal with corsage sported by Firestar at these and other momentous events? Where would New York's *Daily Bugle* be without the thou-



sands of published super-shots snapped by the ever-lucky master of the game, Peter Parker?

But finding out about these events isn't nearly as easy as capturing them on film, as A.J. Lociciero can tell you. *Damage Control: The Movie*, the spunky 27 year-old director's first, met with mild success, but he wasn't nearly as lucky with his next project, *The Defenders: The Inside Story*.

"I had everything set up," the bearded *wünderkind* whined piteously. "I got all the equipment, the sets, everything. I guess I should have suspected something when none of them returned my phone calls, but so many people had been *in* the Defenders, I figured I wouldn't have a problem turning anybody up.

"None of the original members would return my phone calls. *None*. All the later members were missing, impossible to track down. The rest just said stuff about how it was a period they'd just rather forget. I asked them about staging some of their battles for me, maybe with some stuntmen, and they laughed. *They just laughed*."

Actually, I had to laugh then myself, but A.J.'s problems are apparently fairly common. Nick Lauer, an old hand in the game who got his start at a tabloid, then worked his way up to *Newstime* with his once-in-a-life-time-first-ever photos of Galactus and the Silver Surfer, revealed, "Most of them don't give us [photographers] a hard time on purpose, or even really mind us, like Spider-Man is really gonna worry about his best side, right? I mean, he's got a mask, right? Naw, they're just busy people, they move around, they fall out with each other. If there's nobody around when that stuff happens, it's their business. If there's a guy like me around, it's news."

So how do you go about catching an up-and-coming hero-on-the-go during his daily business? "Me, I do mondo research, put together maps of where different guys show up, keep track of who they're seen with, stuff like that," Lauer confided. "A lot of the more public ones are real close to the more secretive ones, the ones worth the big bucks. From what I've seen, they get together pretty often. Some of these friendships — and plenty are *more* than that, I can tell you, but I won't, 'cause I like havin' two good hands. Anyway, you can get a lot of good stuff that way. A lot of guys play to hunches, hang out in places that 'feel right', like that. They aren't as consistent as me, but I've seen guys get some amazing shots that way. I wish I knew how Parker does it. Now *that* guy is a legend."

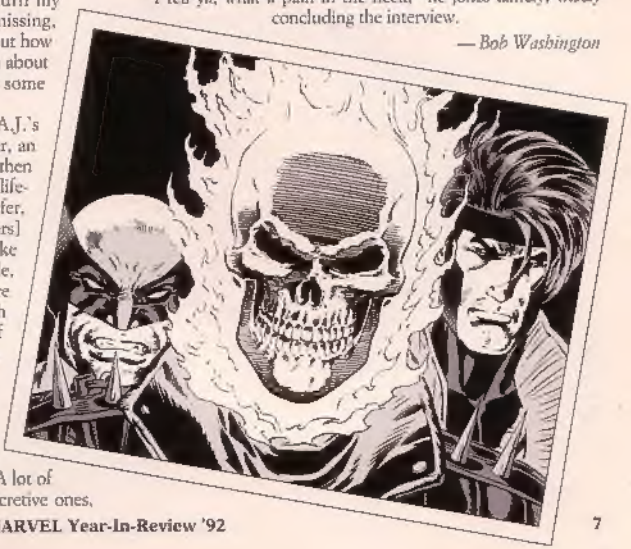
A brief phone interview with said legend was difficult at first. Parker, speculated by some to be a close friend or possibly relative of the Amazing One himself and responsible for more shots of the wall-crawler and his super-buddies than you can shake a light meter at, was hesitant to discuss his working methods at first, but eventually conceded he uses methods similar to Lauer's. "How did the other photographers say they got all *their* shots?" he asked coyly, adding, "Uhhh, yeah, yeah, that's the tick— I mean, yes, that sounds about right."

But Parker was unwilling to discuss the hazards of the jobs, saying simply "It's just what I have to do to get the shots." But Lauer was more forthcoming: "Oh yeah, they ain't all peaches and oat bran," he said non-sequitively. "These are people used to getting their way. Even the public ones can be dangerous. I was in Central Park once, when they — the Avengers, I mean — was fightin' Kang, y'know? Some of the best stuff I ever shot. So a few days after I'm walkin' down the street and I'm stung, see? And then it happens again. And again. And all the way to the doctor's and all the way home..." Apparently, Lauer had caught Janet Van Dyne in a particularly heroic but spectacularly unflattering moment, and the Winsome Wasp had taken it upon herself to deliver a personal complaint. "I'm real careful about my editing now," Lauer adds ruefully.

Of course, complete blunders are possible as well. "I had this intern, a real gung-ho kid, all of a sudden get real mysterious, takin' off all the time, borrowin' special equipment. He comes back one night all pale and shaky, goin' on and on about how he's got the shots that'll make him and how he can't believe he's alive to show 'em off. Kid develops three out of seven blank rolls before he tells me he was chasin' this flyin' guy called Morbius ...

I tell ya, what a pain in the neck," he jokes lamely, wisely concluding the interview.

— Bob Washington



Don't Try This At Home!

Getting super powers may be harmful to your health

Marvel Year-in-Review looked at how some of the best known super heroes acquired their superhuman powers, then consulted real world scientists for information about the actual effects of these exposures. Our hair practically fell out when we heard the gory truth. Nevertheless, in the spirit of scientific completeness and investigative reporting (not to mention our sick, morbid curiosity), we decided to try and replicate these super powers, using the meager resources to which we have access. Don't worry, though — we're not so politically incorrect as to perform sadistic and unnecessary experiments on defenseless laboratory animals. We used our high school intern, Danny Schneider.

SUPER HERO	SUPERHUMAN POWERS	SOURCE OF POWERS	REAL WORLD MEDICAL EFFECTS	REAL WORLD INTERN EXPOSURE	REAL WORLD INTERN EFFECTS
SPIDER-MAN	Superhuman strength and agility; sticks to walls and ceilings; "spider sense"	Bitten by irradiated spider	Serious raising and reddening of skin; pruritis (itching)	Microwaved spiders placed on clean arm	Queasy facial expression; rash on site of exposure
SPIDER-WOMAN	Superhuman strength; sticks to walls by excreting unknown adhesive substance from palms and soles	Combination of special serum derived from spider blood and a certain radiation treatment	Immune reaction to foreign cells in blood; aplastic anemia (bone marrow depletion); death	Force-fed 64 oz. cobweb milkshakes while strapped to the door of hospital radiology suite	Nausea; vomiting; extreme irritability
HULK	Superhuman strength, stamina, durability; increased weight and height; greening of the skin	Intense gamma radiation	Agitation; anxiety; depression; itching; acute dystonic reaction (queasiness); prostate cancer; delayed Tourette's Syndrome (spastic twitching and inappropriate cursing)	Secured for 24 hrs, 6 inches from leaky microwave oven set on high	Agitation; anxiety; depression; itching; inappropriately loud cursing
SHE-HULK	Superhuman strength, stamina, durability; increased weight and height; greening of the skin	Transfusion of gamma-irradiated blood	Transfused cells die, collect in spleen, and are broken down for excretion; liver damage	Transfusion of own blood luminated by green party light	Fainted at sight of own blood
WOLVERINE	Unbreakable bones	Skeleton laced with adamantium	Arthritis; osteoporosis (bone hardening)	Consumed 4 gal. milk from cartons containing 14k gold chains	Strong bones; bright shiny eyes; great muscle tone; super smile
DAREDEVIL	Superhuman senses of smell, hearing, touch and taste	Toxic waste radiation	Burn and necrosis (tissue turns black and dies) of face, eyes and hands	Poured Head & Shoulders shampoo on face & hands	Hypersensitivity rash
WASP	Flight via wings; shrinks to 1/2" height; projects bioelectric bolts from hands	Cellular implantation graft, biochemical augmentation and Pym particle cellular mutation	Graft vs. host reaction sensitizes tissues to other substances (e.g. cotton); bone marrow depletion; itching; breast cancer; death	Crazy glued 20 insect wings (plucked from car radiator grills) to shoulders and rode nonstop elevator to 26th floor up and down 50 times	Nausea; vomiting
SPEEDBALL	Kinetic field causes bouncing proportionate to kinetic energy exerted against him; increased height and weight	Irradiation by unknown source of energy	Bone marrow depletion; nausea and vomiting	Box of No-Doz tablets dissolved in 4 cups of espresso	Hyperactivity (e.g. bouncing at a great speed independent of kinetic energy applied); insomnia
FANTASTIC FOUR	Various powers	Cosmic radiation	Sunburn; skin sloughing; malignant melanoma (skin cancer); death	12 hrs. under sunlamp left on high with forced viewing of movie lying 6" from screen:	Sunburn; irritability; acute psychotic reaction; ruined his eyes that way
Mr. Fantastic	Extreme pliability and extension			*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*	
The Invisible Woman	Mentally renders herself and objects invisible; can project force fields			*The Invisible Man*	
The Thing	Superhuman strength; orange flexible rock-like hide			*The Thing*	
Human Torch	Living fire; flies; hurls fireballs			*Towering Inferno*	
CLOAK & DAGGER	Teleportation through dimensions of darkness; intangibility; constant hunger for light	Ingestion of experimental illegal drug	Pill-rolling tremor; rigidity; drooling; expressionless face; shuffling gait	Drank 16 oz. bottle of Clear Coke	Pill-rolling tremor; rigidity; drooling; expressionless face; shuffling gait
	Projects psionic light daggers that drain living beings of vitality, cures drug addictions and feeds Cloak				
POWER PACK	Various powers:	Infusion of Kymellian bio-energy	Headache; vertigo; confusion; nausea	Drank 4 gallons of Kool-aid, Hi-C, Gatorade and Jolt, all with Slim-Fast chasers	Urinary frequency; constipation; irritability; motor hyperactivity; uncontrollable craving for steak and french fries
Julie Powers	Flies at high speed				
Katie Powers	Controls energy				
Alex Powers	Power over gravity				
Jack Powers	Alters own density				
MAN-THING	Superhuman strength; empathic sensitivity to emotional states of living beings; excretes fuming sulfuric acid	Synergistic interaction of mystical energy and chemical mutagens	Skin sloughing; kidney damage; liver damage; marrow toxicity; nausea; vomiting; hair loss; death	Soaked in Oil of Olay and waded in scummy Central Park pond for 24 hours	Caught malaria from mosquito bite and died; but has soft, smooth, younger-looking skin

— Micheline F. Dugué

I MARRIED A SKRULL

Bizarre alien/human couplings = boffo ratings

by Dan Slott

Those in the know just plain *knew* that the burning hot marriage of Johnny "Human Torch" Storm to Alicia "Aren't You the Thing's Girlfriend" Masters would eventually go down in flames. Let's get real, blind sculptor who used to date orange rock pile weds living fireball? No way. Sure enough, the annulment papers were filed earlier this year with a thus-far unprecedented legal reason — the blushing bride was really a green alien shape-changing Skrull.

Well, we media vultures all had our fun poking and prodding this turn of events — let's face it, guys, it just doesn't *get* any better than this — but none so much as The Super Channel cable network (see sidebar), who produced a mid-season replacement unapologetically entitled *I Married a Skrull*. This quirky little situation comedy has done quite well for itself in the ratings, even going toe-to-toe with the syndicated favorite *Lifestyles of the Super and Famous*. But now TSC is having second thoughts as it comes under fire from a $2 million federal lawsuit filed by Johnny Storm and Fantastic Four, Inc.

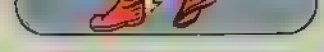
Storm's suit claims that the main characters of *I Married a Skrull* are directly based on the lives of himself and his estranged Skrullian bride, Lyja. The Super Channel has denied any correlation between Storm and the sitcom characters Tommy & Lisa Rain, referring to the similarities as "purely coincidental."

But it gets juicier. When the case finally went to court, Storm's council, Matt Murdock (who's never actually *seen* the show), cited numerous episodes in which the Tommy Rain character has burst into flame. Murdock used the following excerpts from *I Married a Skrull* scripts as evidence:

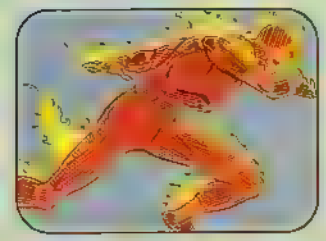
From episode #2/ *"Fun at the Beach"* or *"Put That Blaster Down"*:
TOMMY: Honey, no, my hand's still in the microwaAIYEEEE *(bursts into flame)*

From episode #5/ *"The Hunting Trip"* or *"That's No Bear, That's My Wife"*:
TOMMY: Nothing like the smell of a good barbequAIYEEEE *(bursts into flame)*

From episode #6/ *"Look Who's Coming to Dinner"* or *"My Mother-in-Law, the Cannibal"*
TOMMY: Yeah, I could use a light. What? What are you doing? AIYEEE *(bursts into flame)*



From episode #8/ *"Those Wacky Kree Neighbors!"* or "My *Negabomb? I Thought it Was* Your *Negabomb!"*
TOMMY: And this over here is the back porch bug zapperAIYEEE *(bursts into flame)*



From episode #9/ *"A Christmas on Skrull Throne World"* or *"AIYEEE"*
TOMMY: Gee, I've never seen Christmas lights quite like these — AIYEEE *(bursts into flame)*

Murdock claimed that the entire show concept — and especially the main character's repeated combustion — represented an obvious attempt to capitalize on Johnny Storm's popularity, with no permission or reimbursement.

After severe badgering from the relentless Murdock, Super Channel execs finally caved in and admitted that their character *was* in fact based *loosely* on Johnny Storm. The legal battle then became one centering around the issue of privacy and public figures. "If Storm didn't want this kind of attention," insisted TSC public relations head Lou Figueroa "then he shouldn't have exposed himself to cosmic rays in the first place."

Figueroa was released from the Super Channel shortly after making this boneheaded statement, however, and all further work on *I Married a Skrull*'s second season was put on hold. Actor Donny Lomax (who portrays Tommy Rain on the show) has been in limbo ever since, along with the rest of the *Skrull* cast and crew. He therefore had plenty of time on his hands for us to briefly speak with him.

MYIR: So how do you feel about this recent turn of events, Donny?

LOMAX: Just awful. I mean, we got a great show going here. And the fans — they just love it.

MYIR: Now, before we go any further, I'd just like to point out to our readers that you're actually the *second* actor to play the part of Tommy Rain, isn't that right?

LOMAX: Yes. We lost the first in a freak combustion accident. I hear it was really awful. Bits of him were all over the —

MYIR: Right. There was a lot of speculation at that point as to whether the show could go on. If people could accept a *second* Tommy.

LOMAX: That was then. I mean, I've got ten a lot of fan mail from people who like

THE SUPER CHANNEL

Pushing all the right buttons

POW! ZAP! WHAM! That's how fast this overnight cable wonder blitzed itself onto our screens. The Super Channel, a combination of new programming and old dramatizations of superheroics, was expected to be dead before its first year was out. Who would pay to see shabby home video shows like *I Spy A Super Guy* rotated with umpteen-dozen Fantastic Four movies and old Dazzler videos?

Nobody ever lost money betting on the American audience's capacity for stuff that blows up and the people who make it go boom, however. The Super Channel proved this rule once again, scoring big as Fantastic Four nostalgia increased with the dramatic events of last year. Even *Super Dance Party USA*, hosted by Captain Ultra with occasional appearances by Simon Williams and other super media sharks, took off in the cable Nielsens (this reporter's own teen daughter was caught, legs four feet apart in a melodramatic pose, Doin' the Kirby!)

The Super Channel became an overnight success, and its nightly lineup of original programming expanded ever wider. Indeed, the ratings triumph of *I Married A Skrull* was predestined by the smash success of the show it was spun off from — *Married ... With Mutants*, starring gorgeous airhead Chrissy Peachgate as that lovable newlywed who develops a different and hysterically funny power each week. Who can forget the instant classic "Lie-Detecting Powers On Hubby's Night Out With the Boys"

the second Tommy *more*

MYIR: Uh huh.

LOMAX. No, really. And I felt that the character still had a lot of room to grow, y'know?

MYIR: The TV critic in the *Guide* says that all the second Tommy does is scream "LEEEE-SA!!" every time his wife uses her powers.

Donny "Leeee-sa!" Lomax

LOMAX. Well, sure, but I think it's the actual line readings I'm doing that make the difference y'know? The interpretation of the part. I mean, I can only give *you* what the writers give *me* to play with.

MYIR: So you think the scripts have gone down in quality, then.

LOMAX. Oh, no, I didn't say that. I mean, we got some great stuff here. I mean, look at that episode where my Skrull mother-in-law showed up and ate the nosy next door neighbor...

MYIR: *(laughing)* Yeah! Or that one where Lisa shape-changed into the neighborhood wino!

LOMAX: *(laughing)* Yeah, or the one where she became Mr. T!

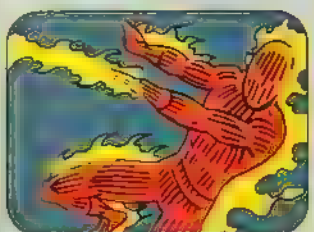
MYIR: It was good to see him get some work again.

LOMAX. Yeah, he's a great guy.

MYIR: *(laughing)* What about the one where you fell into the blue dye ... and Lisa thought you were a Kree and tried to slash you with a bread knife! *(laughing)* Now *that* was the best!

LOMAX. That was the *first* Tommy.

MYIR: Oh. Sorry. M



episode?

TSC has only solidified its hold on the cable-going public with its two newest shows. The first, *Doom's Diner* ("Scientific Genius. World Leader. Alleged Super-Villain. BUT CAN HE COOK?"), has a premise even Dan Quayle can understand. Doom chucks the dictator bit for ownership of a cheesy diner in Florida left to him by his long-lost Uncle Norm. And the success of *Punisher Five-0* ("Kill 'em, Dano") was slowed only when all sets, equipment, and stars mysteriously exploded, with a cryptic note left behind reading "Too wimpy. They left at least four perps alive every episode. Also, I do NOT have an accent. -Frank"

But now, with the *I Married a Skrull* lawsuit in progress and another [illegible] threatened over the ill fated *Dr [illegible]* project, the Super Channel's future could be in serious doubt. Still, [illegible] their super programming has already had on the entire TV landscape is unquestionable. If you don't believe us take a look at some of the broadcast networks' scheduled mid-season replacements for 1993.

GROWING UP BUCKY (CBS)

Join nomadic adventurer Jack Monroe as he daydreams about his 1950's life as the second Captain America's sidekick. Watch him learn poignant lessons of life while kicking Commie butt! Starring Fred Savage as young BUCKY. Wednesdays at 8:30 PM.

JUST THE FOURTEEN OF US (ABC)

Can fourteen mutants share a mansion without driving each other crazy? Laughs abound as these mutated madcaps learn poignant lessons of life while trying to share the bathroom, arguing over what to watch on TV, and blasting each other to smithereens in disagreements about dishwashing chores. This one's a winner for sure, with Patrick Stewart as PROFESSOR X, Alyssa Milano as PSYLOCKE and Lorenzo Lamas as GAMBIT. Watch for it, Saturdays at 8:30 PM.

MURDERWORLD GLADIATORS (IND)

Are you ready to rise to the challenge? Do you think you have a *choice*? Tune in and watch as Arcade takes randomly-picked contestants from all over America and puts them through his Labyrinth of Death. Who will survive? Who *cares*? It's good, fun family viewing, Sundays at 1:00 AM.

AVENGERS 90210 (FOX)

These West Coast heroes not only know how to take on the bad guys, but they also know how to dress for the occasion. Join WANDA (Mary Lou Henner), VISION (Brent Spiner), WONDER MAN (Simon Williams) and the rest of the gang as they learn poignant lessons of life while mall-hopping, every Tuesday at 8:00 PM!

THIS OLD ARMOR (PBS)

Former Vault Guardsman and current Avengers security chief Michael O'Brian shows us how we can use common household gadgets and gizmos to perk up that suit of combat armor we're all tinkering around with in the garage. Previous training in microtechnology and Vibranium welding helpful. Wednesdays at 7:00 PM.

— Dan Slott and Bob Washington

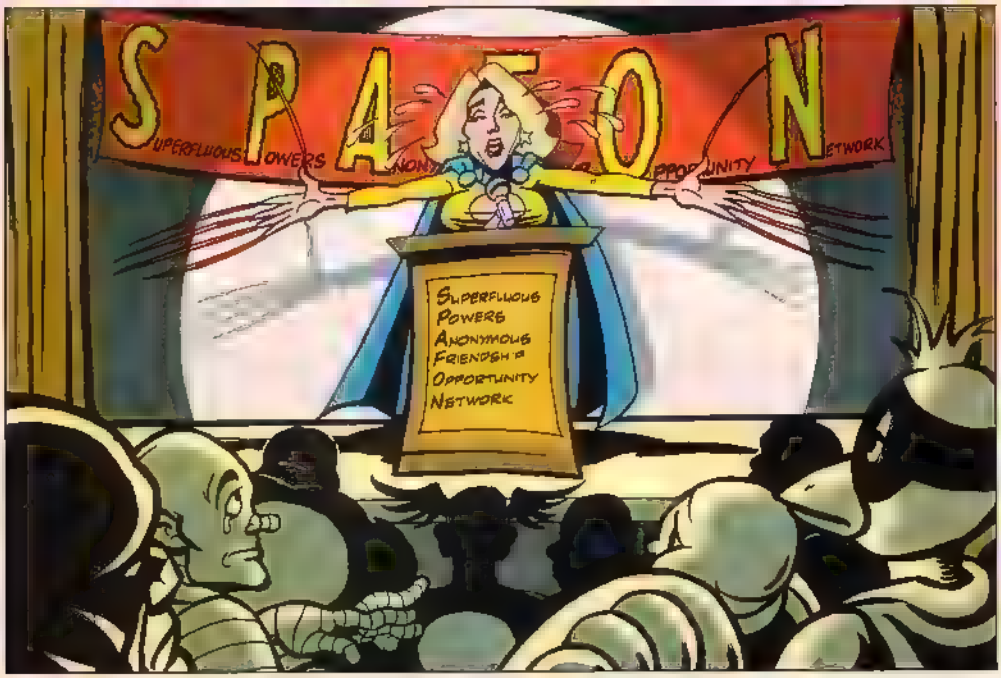
FRANK CASTLE ON TRANSIT SECURITY:

"When I'm in the city, I ride the subway. It's fast, efficient, and there's never a dull moment."

Frank Castle is better known as the Punisher ... and when he sets a sound ecological example by taking the train, we all breathe a little easier.

THE MASS TRANSIT AUTHORITY.
Getting our security wherever we can find it.

With So-So Power...


S P A F O N
SUPERFLUOUS POWERS ANONYMOUS FRIENDSHIP OPPORTUNITY NETWORK
SUPERFLUOUS POWERS ANONYMOUS FRIENDSHIP OPPORTUNITY NETWORK

"Okay, so, like, there I was, okay, with like this radioactive junk all over me and stuff and like, I'm glowing and feeling rilly sick, so like I pass out and wake up in the hospital, okay? And then like I wake up and my hands are feeling like, rilly strange, I mean just *très* bizarro and I like reached to get a glass of water and like, just sliced through the glass and tray with my nails, okay? Like they were artificial that morning, but now they're real, like a part of me and they cut through all that glass and steel and wood and plastic and junk like a chain saw through French toast! So I figure I must have like, powers, right?

"Only, it's just in my nails. My powers, I mean. Just my fingernails. Not my hands, not my fingers, not even my cuticles, they get like all bruised and swollen whenever I use my powers, you know? And like, I used to be a hand model, showing off like rings and bracelets and fingernail polish and junk? But now I need this particle accelerator beam just to *cut* 'em, and it's like totally too expensive and they grow so fast all of a sudden..."

The gorgeous vapid blonde breaks into sobs, about to rest her head in her palms, then suddenly recoils from the set of pencil-thin sabers springing from her hands. "I just have to totally take it one day at a time ..." she moans. And the crowd around her bursts into applause.

The origin of Press-On may be as laughable as her name, but scenarios just as ridiculous are occurring all the time. It's only natural in a world where the possibility to augment humans with abilities beyond mortal ken implies that not all such powers be necessarily ... well, *powerful*. After all, not everybody who suffers through a Traumatic Scientific Accident gets powers that are guaranteed to land you in the Avengers.

And yes, like any group of pathetic whiny losers with an excuse, people with useless or trivial powers have banded together in support groups to gawk at each others' misery — whoops. I mean, share each others' problems and grow strong.

S.P.A.F.O.N. (Superfluous Powers Anonymous Friendship and Opportunity Network, is the largest such program for these quasi-powered individuals, boasting over 30 chapters, mostly in the Greater New York City area. "Mainly people come to feel legitimized, that they aren't just silly," intones Larry Lebenstein, head of S.P.A.F.O.N.'s Manhattan chapter. "Some are mutants who've had to deal with ridicule all their lives. Some got their powers by accident, people who felt normal, who were normal all their lives until now. It can be a big adjustment."

The S.P.A.F.O.N. twelve-step program is very methodical

"First we wean them off of the instinctive compulsion to find a use for their powers in order to justify them," Lebenstein explains. "Press-On's experiences and feelings are very common. Then we teach them that their power is special, that they don't have to be able to save the world to be important."

While Larry's own power — the mutant ability to accurately count the calories of any given foodstuff on contact, which earned him the nickname Weightwatcher — has a long way to go before it teaches me that all powers are special, there's no denying that some people have abilities that can be of some use. Larry, for example, cleans up with dieters and food research laboratories. "Constant use of my powers has developed them to the point of my being able to count fats and carbohydrates, and I even helped the FDA out with those, so I guess you could say I've fought crime," he says.

But some members of S.P.A.F.O.N. are not the helpless victims of mutation or freak accidents that Lebenstein would have you believe they are. Take, please, William Sklar, whose taste for juvenile mischief landed the pesky teen in real hot water one day.

"My dad's a nanochemist — works with polymers that can affect things on the atomic level, see?" Sklar explains. "And he comes home with this formula that he says has 'amazing tensile strength-extending properties.' So I figure, well, I've always wanted to be strong, so if I take a bath in this stuff . . . I was fourteen, you know? Who knew?"

Unfortunately for the ignorant youngster, "tensile strength" means 'elasticity', and little Billy found himself with the ability to inflate his skin like unto a tire, until his torso and limbs reach spheroid proportions.

"If I only blow up a little, I look real buffed, but I'm so light, I can just blow away," he bemoans during a S.P.A.F.O.N. 'sharing session.' "If I puff up to full size, I can bounce around, and I'm almost kinda invulnerable to sticks and rocks and stuff," he preens ludicrously. "Maybe I look pretty stupid, but they just bounce right off. I can take kicks and punches pretty good, too. I tried to get the Thing to punch me once, but he said he didn't want to hurt me. Can you *believe* that wimp?"

Indeed, at first, no amount of ridicule could stop the Astonishing Puffball from attempting to make his mark on the super hero world. "I figured I could just hang out someplace and get discovered," Sklar recalls. "That got old *real* quick. Then I figured I'd apply with the big teams on an entry-level basis, maybe some kind of internship. I even made up a resumé. I guess it just doesn't work that way. Then I tried the X Guys. Okay, I *admit* I lied about the mutant part, but those people are really X-clusive. Get it? X . . ."

Sklar's little joke is greeted only by cold stares from his fellow lame-o's, possibly due to their own all-too-similar experiences.

"Ah, anyway, so I tried going solo, to maybe build up some references, but it didn't work out. For one thing, any costume big enough to fit me in my hero identity would show under my regular clothes, so charging into action at a moment's notice was a real problem. I can't imagine how guys like Iron Man do it. Then there was some other stuff . . ." he trails off, preferring not to go on about his one and only known adventure, which paved the way for the New York *Daily Bugle* headline, "BOHUNK BUFFBOY BLIMPS UP, BATTED LIKE BEACHBALL BY BEETLE!"

Painfully — for Sklar, for his audience, and especially for me — he continues his litany. "Then it got to be like an obsession for me, to use my powers somehow," he confesses. "I sunk lower and lower. Finally I was shanking carnival guess-your-weight games. My weight stays the same no matter what my size did I mention that?" he repeats desperately. "So there I was with an armful of cheap prizes I was going to fence, and I saw myself in one of those funhouse mirrors, all bloated up, clutching these cheesy toy dolls and badly-made statues, and I said, 'This is it. You've hit rock bottom.' I found S.P.A.F.O.N. not too much later. I guess when you decide you really *need* help, you find it."

Then there's Birdwatcher, who heads the L.A. chapter who can sense, no matter where he is, the minute the swallows return to Capistrano, right down to the second. "I tell you, it's eerie," Lebenstein coos. "He's only in demand once a year, but he gets plenty from talk shows and Weather Channel appearances. Even Press-On gets work now, standing in as a figure model for types like the Brood and Lady Deathstrike as well as stunt doubling for a certain horror film star."

Of course, some of these working-class heroes make more practical use of their so-called powers than others. We tracked down Go-Getter — a spunky college student with the ability to mentally manipulate traffic lights — at his part-time job as a taxi driver. He flatly denies any commercial use of his powers, though. "Playing with traffic lights under any circumstances is a crime," he deadpanned. "And if I admitted to that in print, I could go to jail."

Sure pal, *I* understand. With so-so power etcetera.

But he *still* gave me the fastest crosstown ride I've ever had.

Bob Washington

Fakes, Fangs AND Fabrications

BY PETER SANDERSON

My evil twin
Bad weather friend
I know someday I'll meet him
but I don't know where or when

The Moody Blues

In the Marvel Universe is a big place.

Spider-Man kicked off the new year with "Round Robin: The Sidekick's Revenge." It's all about this costumed teenaged sidekick who was sentenced to be blown to smithereens in a telephone poll and gets revenge on his caped mentor by badmouthing his new movie, and oh, sorry. What company is this — Marvel? Sorry. Never mind.

Wolverine started 1992 by discovering that everything he knew about his past is wrong. His dead sweetheart Silver Fox is neither dead, sweet, nor silver, but still a fox. Sabretooth is not his father but his partner in a Sixties spy thriller/buddy movie gone horribly wrong. And they all used to work with Maverick, played by James Garner.

Okay: first Thanos had the Infinity Gauntlet and he became God. Then Nebula got the Infinity Gauntlet and she became God. Now Adam Warlock gets the Infinity Gauntlet and he becomes God. Sorry, guys, somehow we don't think anybody's ever going to paint a Sistine Chapel for these three hosebags. So Warlock decides to split up the Infinity Gems among the six members of the Infinity Watch (which sounds like a timepiece whose batteries never run down), and in his infinite wisdom he entrusts these gems to: a brain-damaged muscleman (Drax), a drunken slacker (Pip the Troll) and a dangerous madwoman (Moondragon), among others. Geez . . . he should have gone with someone a bit more stable and trustworthy — like maybe Saddam Hussein. (Bah-*dum*-dum.)

The Punisher killed some people.

Desperate for a way to leave the New Year's party being thrown for X-Force by the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, Cannonball got himself killed by Sauron the Pitalking Pterodactyl. But trust us, Cannonball's Not Really Dead. After all, death is so totally uncool. He was probably just hiding in his room cramming for exams.

Alpha Flight renamed the principal members of the team "Core Alpha." As if these guys could core an apple, let alone an alpha.

The Swordsman returned in AVENGERS #343. Well, *maybe* it's the Swordsman. But he's dead and buried. Okay, so maybe it's a new guy claiming he's the Swordsman. We never [illegible] But the new guy doesn't have a moustache. So maybe it was just the moustache that died.

AVENGERS #344 was titled "Battle of the Dark Knights." With Michael Keaton as the Black Knight. (Bear with us, folks — we do this just to see if any of our [illegible] are still paying attention.)

So anyway, the not-dead Swordsman is now hanging out with a babe in armor named Magdalene. Played by Barbara Hershey, no doubt. And *she* hangs out with Proctor, a sinister detergent manufacturer who was once the partner of the notorious Gamble.

By the end of AVENGERS #344 the sun is about to go nova. Sales on sunblock go up a thousandfold.

Meanwhile, Crystal and her baby moved into Avengers Mansion. What a nice, safe place to raise an infant. We hear she'll be hiring Nomad to babysit the kid next. Hope she at least keeps the baby out of the sun on Nova Day.

In AVENGERS WEST COAST #76, Wonder Man got a job acting in the movie *The Demon That Devoured Hollywood*. Plans are for this flick to play at the bottom of triple-pain bills with *Captain America* and *The Punisher*. And in the course of his next stellar movie role, in *The Night Shift Takes Hollywood* (issue #78) Wonder Man was hanged from the Hollywood sign. All too symbolic of how Wondy's career has done at the box office.

Now let's meet our first candidate for Dysfunctiona. Family of the Year: the Bazins of DARKHAWK. Philippe is a ruthless New York crimelord who hates Darkhawk, but his devoted daughter Alexandra doesn't want to know what business [illegible] Sometimes he [illegible] jobs. Alexandra likes to *think* that her Daddy might actually hold: 10) Dogcatcher. 9) Fashion consultant to Val Cooper. 8) Research assistant to Oliver Stone. 7) Sitcom producer for the Fox Network. 6) Tiger wrangler for Siegfried and Roy. 5) Public relations agent for the New Warriors. 4) Las Vegas-based casting director. 3) The new Chief Examiner. 2) Mystery member of the Infinity Watch. 1) Editor of *Marvel Year-In-Review*/Janitor (tie).

Oh, by the way: Tombstone tore the mysterious amulet out of Darkhawk's chest in DARKHAWK #11. Next time Darkhawk decides to wear jewelry, he'll get his ears pierced instead. Just thought you'd like to know.

The Punisher killed more people.

[illegible] girlfriend Diamondback was abducted by Crossbones and taken on a road trip. She keeps calling

Fakes, Fangs and Fabrications

continued from page 16.

han Bing. But then where's Hope? Does this make her Dorothy ("Armour in a hopeless situation? If it weren't for us these movie reference subtexts would go right past you.)

Daredevil beat the living day glo's out of the Kingpin and later told him he forgives him. The Kingpin wished Daredevil had gotten into this kinder, gentler mood a wee bit earlier.

The villainous lullaby menaced Sleepwalker. After getting out of jail, Lullaby signed up to be lead singer with a Golden Oldies tour.

Deathlok teamed up with the Punisher. "Rather his methods," admitted Deathlok, "but his mission is clear and focused." Yeah, and his bullets fly true, too.

In DEATHLOK'S RANGE #3, the Frankensurfer hot dogged us all right into our hearts.

You know GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY is set in the 31st century of an alternate reality, not 1992. So that means we don't have to cover it. Nyah, nyah, nyah.

In IRON MAN #276-277 the brainwashed Black Widow launched a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union just before the whole place collapsed under its own weight anyway.

Marvel Boy was arrested in NEW WARRIORS #20. The public was outraged that Marvel Boy was singled out for such treatment and demanded that the rest of the New Warriors be sent up the river too. New Warriors PR man Philippe Bazin pointed out that their comic book would sell even better if the titles were changed to TEENAGE CHAIN GANG SUPER HEROES.

The Punisher killed even more people.

The cover of QUASAR #31 shut down. "There's No Escape from the New Universe." On the whole, we'd rather be in Pittsburgh.

"The Name of the Rose" began in WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #84. Sean Connery refused to act in the Marvel version and was replaced by Roger Moore using a walker.

Then Operation: Galactic Storm started. The Kree and the Shi'ar decided to fight it out in Earth's solar system. *Hey, you kids with your lousy video games! Get out back where you belong! Turn off the TV and read a book!*

With great fanfare Northstar exited the closet in ALPHA FLIGHT #106 only to discover that everyone had long figured out a hundred issues ago.

In AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #359-360 Spider-Man reluctantly teamed up with Cardiac, a physician who kills people he decides are bad guys. A radical reinterpretation of the Hippocratic Oath by any standard.

In AVENGERS #345, the Vision said, "I believe Thor we are witnessing the formation of a wormhole." Thor replied, (insert *double-entendre* here of your choice using the word "suck.")

Hawkeye turned himself back into Goliath II and Ant-Man III that is in order to take on the Kree. Readers sat scratching their heads, wondering why Hawkeye hadn't thought of doing this the *several hundred previous times* he was up against powerful bad guys.

Fush or break. This year various Avengers and X-Men decided to wear dull brown jackets over their brightly colored skintight costumes. No one would tell us whether Peter Falk is getting a royalty cut.

Deathlok met Ghost Rider in DEATHLOK #9 and #10, and then wondered aloud if there are any top-selling characters he hasn't met yet. (Psst Deathlok — *Venom*.)

In issues #38-40, Doctor Strange battled the supernatural Fear Lords with help from the Scarecrow, who changed his name to the Straw Man to avoid being confused with either the GHOST RIDER villain of the same name or with Ray Bolger.

Over in EXCALIBUR #48, Rachel "Phoenix" Summers met her Aunt Phoenix. Rachel got all excited and asked about her Uncle Phoenix and cousin Phoenixes, not to mention Aunt Phoenix's buddy from WHAT THE — ?! Aunt Phoenix: "What do you *mean* we misspelled a name?"

GHOST RIDER #23 began by announcing that "We can only hope that this also means the end of the Ghost Rider." Heh. No such luck.

Anyway, Ghost Rider repeated his vow never to take a human life — but Deathwatch doesn't count because he's not human. We don't know. Ghosts you seem really bigoted.

War broke out in Transylvania in HULK #390, giving the Hulk the opportunity to do his impression of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Hopefully, he'll not be back.

A woman who claimed to be Rick Jones's mom turned up in HULK #390. Hey, this could become a trend. Alleged parents of Marvel characters return from the presumed dead! Nah, they'd never pull that twice in one year.

The cover of NEW WARRIORS #21 asked, "What is the Folding Circle?" Our guess is, something you make in origami class? Our response is, where do these New Warriors villains get their names.

The Punisher definitely stuck in a nut, killed more people.

Mahkizmo the Nuclear Man, possibly the Marvel villain with the lowest IQ measurable by modern science, turned up in SHE-HULK and bumblingly tried to seduce her. Maybe Jen ought to try the singles ads instead. Mahkizmo then went over to the Distinguished Competition and tried to convince them he's stupid, bloodthirsty and melodramatic enough to understudy with their main man Lobo. No response at press time.

Alpha Flight embarked on a World Tour in issue #107, only to lose most of their luggage somewhere in Symkaria.

HIT & RUN

MATT MURDOCK

By Kurt Busiek and Tom Grindberg

Say what you will, he gets results.

MYIR talks to recently-reinstated killer litigator Matthew Murdock in his swanky new digs in the Worldwide Plaza.

MYIR: **Congratulations on being re-admitted to the bar, Mr. Murdock.**

Murdock: Thank you. It's good to be back.

MYIR: **As I understand it, you've publicly stated that you originally lost your license to practice law because —**

Murdock: I was framed.

MYIR: **Uh-huh. By the spice importer and reputed crime figure Wilson Fisk, who took a sudden and violent dislike to you because —?**

Murdock: I don't choose to say.

MYIR: **I see. And the state decided to overturn your disbarment because — ?**

Murdock: I don't choose to say.

MYIR: **Mm-hmm. And the one man who might be able to answer these questions, Fisk, is under indictment but missing under unusual circumstances. I don't suppose you know where — ?**

Murdock: I have no idea.

MYIR: **Of course not. Well, thanks for your time. And counselor —**

Murdock: Yes?

MYIR: **Our lips are sealed.**

Fakes, Fangs AND Fabrications

(continued from page 16)

Deathbird was charged with assassinating Kree leaders Ael-Dann and Dar-Benn, in AVENGERS #346. Oliver Stone rushed to the Kree Empire to check out the grassy knolls. Philippe Bazin took notes.

So a bunch of Avengers were taken prisoner and got marched around on the Kree homeworld Hala. Now, it's long been established that the Kree can't breathe on Earth without special potions or equipment, and that their world has heavier gravity than Earth's. So you'd think the Avengers would fall down gasping and choking on Hala. But they don't. And do you know *why*? You *do*? Well heck, clue us in, please.

Philippe Bazin and Darkhawk's dad apparently killed each other. This complicated Bazin's managing to hold down ten different jobs. Meanwhile, Darkhawk got all upset in issues #13 and #14 because Venom keeps sticking [illegible] tongue out at him.

Hey, if the FF's new villain Occu[illegible] unforgiving got a Ph.D. would he be Marvel's second Doc Ock?

Deathwatch blew up [illegible] GHOST RIDER #24. But we [illegible] he takes a licking and keeps on ticking.

Val Cooper turned up in HULK #[illegible]92 in a harem outfit. Look, it's hard [illegible] such to believe [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Fakes, Fangs and Fabrications

continued from page 17;

Deathbird, as her viceroy in charge of the remaining Kree. *And* made her leader of the super-powered strike team Star Force. In her spare time, we hear Lilandra likes to hand Deathbird loaded guns and then turn her back and write in favor of her wearing a bullseye.

Captain Mar-Vell of the Supreme Intelligence wasn't dead after all. But you were all fooled for four whole pages. Hah!

It's our guess that Dark Phoenix was Jean Grey's evil twin. And so was Madelyne Pryor, alias the Goblin Queen during the "Inferno" story line. This can be explained as a rare case of evil triplets.

Luke Cage (Power Man) changed his billing to just plain Cage, thereby joining the ranks of other celebrities with only one name, like Cher, Liberace, and Madonna.

Evil sorcerer Master Khan removed Namor's memory in issue #25 and banished him to the untamed wilderness of (gasp) shudder! the Pacific Northwest. Luckily, Namor didn't run into any infestations of Yuppies out there.

Meanwhile, Namorita started wearing her hair long in NAMOR and short in THE NEW WARRIORS, leading people to wonder if being able to lengthen and shorten her hair at will is one of her mutant powers.

The New Warriors stole an Avengers quintet and flew to Southeast Asia. You know, with Namorita's money, she could've just bought one.

The Ghost Rider's body, Dan Ketch, got his throat torn out by Blackout, but did even Jean Grey could save him from starring in this book.

It's doubly remember back in 1991 in DOCTOR STRANGE #64 when Doctor Doom encountered his evil twin.

Nothing changed, not even his name! Now, two years later, Doom's baby daughter, Valeria, is kidnapped in his back. He's since been served with papers by DC lawyers who claim that he's impersonating the Human Target.

Punisher

Master Sinister turned up in X-FACTOR with absolutely no explanation as to how he could be alive. Sure. Last time, we saw him he was crumpled into atoms. But he had really good life insurance.

Bishop, the X-Man from the future, joined the X-Men in 1993, but it's all in a new spin-off series, featuring his pals Master Mold, Sentinel, and Sunspot, plus the Cyberwarriors, and the X-TERMINATORS, starring Spiral and Mojo's pet, Lockheed. Ultra-cool spandex-habitat.

Cap held a meeting on Moral Values at Avengers Mansion. Appropriately, this showed up in the Bible-thumpin' Republican Convention, where Cap declared his career is going to the dogs. How right he was as well as soon see.

In DARE DEVIL #305-306 we met the Surgeon-General, who kills people to obtain organs for transplants. Apparently she and Cardiac were dorm roommates at medical school.

DEATHLOK #12 introduced Barbarian, a creature that was so ridiculous in honor of being even more disgusting than Terror.

In that same issue, Deathlok came home to his wife bearing a bouquet. "Surprise, honey. I've been turned into a big, ugly cyborg monstrosity! What's for dinner?" (You can just imagine the stir he's going to cause at PTA meetings.)

Ghost Rider and the X-Men headed down to New Orleans for some Cajun cooking, some great jazz, and a good time beating up on slimy Brood aliens. But then Gambit's wife Belladonna died and that just really ruined everybody else's good time.

Moon Knight started meeting his subordinates in the Shadow Cabinet, which he leases from Lamont Cranston and Margo Lane.

In issue #40 of her series, She-Hulk pretended to jump rope in the nude, only to have her editor point out that Marvel would never allow this to happen in a Code-approved book. She-Hulk then took a shower in pretty much full view in the next page. Not that we're complaining.

Avalanche #3 for Marvel Destination. Family of the Year the Silver Surfer. Hah. Take the first issue of Silver's new series, please, in which Silver rescues her ex-fiancée Alicia from terrorists. And when aunt and niece were reunited and Silver expressed love and affection, desire to be with her ex-lover, Surfer's daughter Dawn shrieked in the hall, stay away from home for the prosecutable future, imagine. If *Heaven Sent* had ended like this (Actually, that still is preferable to Silver getting up Norrin's nose and children's screaming are only reminders of what's really missing in your life — and we don't mean chocolate.)

AVENGERS WEST COAST #84-86 centered on a short-lived third party presidential campaign in the summer of 1992. We're sorry, these stories are just getting too unbelievable. This would never happen in real life.

Could anyone make head nor tail of what happens in this series. Perhaps Hawk took out for outer space to clear his head in X-MEN II #53.

The Hulk and Punisher teamed up in Las Vegas to get revenge on Bone Gangster Sam Stryker for killing Gamora. Mayhem Brewing in Vegas decided to intervene. Why the Hulk did. And you really don't want to argue with him. The Punisher passed the time by shooting several showgirls in the legs. Heck, spring to mind. Happy Hour in mediatech started. Advertising replacements.

The monster Namor encountered [illegible]

HIT & RUN

JAMES RHODES

By Kurt Busiek and James Fry

Move over, Spike, Magic and Ice, there's a new rogue gallery to fear.

[The scene: The Stark Enterprises office of James R. "Rhodes." Rhodes sits.]

MYIR: You've had quite a career, Mr. Rhodes. War hero, aviator, super hero for a brief period...

Rhodes: I don't know if I'd cop to "super hero."

MYIR. We understand. Security reasons. And most recently, a promotion to Vice-President of Operations for Stark Enterprises! Quite a plum.

Rhodes: Well, thanks, I try.

MYIR: Many men try ... you succeed. And you do so very publicly in a world where it seems the popular media image of black men is as either criminals or absent fathers. Do you consider yourself a role model for the black community, Mr. Rhodes?

Rhodes: Call me Rhodey. And I don't know ... the words "role model" make me feel funny. But we've got to show our kids ... all our kids, but young black men especially ... that there's a way out, that they should don't abandon hope. If I'm an example of that — well, that's fine with me.

MYIR. Admirable sentiments. But ... how do you reconcile that with reports that you were in the habit of calling your closest friend, the late industrialist Anthony Stark, "massah"?

Rhodey: What? I never called him "massah!" I called him "boss!"

MYIR: Oh, that's *much* better. Jesse Jackson will be *so* relieved to hear that.

Rhodey: Wait — I ... but ...

MYIR: Oops — sorry. We're out of time.

SUPER POOP

Petty Potshots at the Pompous and Powerful

Our 1992 MYIR Most Annoying Media Celebrity award is hereby awarded with sincere contempt to Mary Jane Watson-Parker, starlet of the daytime soap *Secret Hospital* and known far and wide as the poor man's Shannon Doherty. The youth of America just won't stop picking up fan magazines featuring Watson-Parker. So it behooves us to lay out the [illegible] seemingly true. Some such

Item: One of MJ's first showbiz jobs was as a go-go dancer (how embarrassingly retro) at a discotheque aptly named the Gloom Room, which was operated as a front by former "spice merchant" Wilson Fisk, ex Kingpin of Crime. We figure that giving Watson-Parker her big break was reason enough for the Fates to reduce Fat Willie to a utility-vehicle-sized bum.

Item: In her college days MJ dated chemical industry heir Harry Osborn. Osborn subsequently flipped out and started wearing a Halloween costume, flying around throwing pumpkins at people. Coincidence? We think not.

Item: MJ made a great show last year [illegible] a job modeling for a lingerie catalogue because it wouldn't be Proper. We're not quite sure what the difference is between modeling lingerie and posing in those string bikinis for our step-sister publication, *Marvel Illustrated*. And then last year the tabloids reported that Watson-Parker was quarreling with her husband, who didn't want her to do a nude scene in a movie. MJ, pick a position and then stick to it.

Item: For a fashion model, MJ seems to have virtually no fashion sense at all. In fact, her clothes look like they were all designed by comic book artists.

Item: So as soon as MJ was washed up in modeling, she landed a showcase role as lead vixen in *Secret Hospital*. (And it's with this *Secret Hospital* show? If it's a secret hospital, then how do sick people know how to go there? Are the patients really ill? Are the doctors working there secretly while holding jobs as waiters? *Who is everyone hiding from?*) This after not having acted since she was in high school. And she and the hubby move into a SoHo apartment owned by — part-time maid — Harry Osborn!

Item: Ah, yes, the hubby. What does she see in Peter Parker? The guy has been a student at ESU for *twenty-five years* with no sign of ever finishing a degree. What does he do, stay up all night swinging around town? No, he scrapes together a meager income from selling photos of Spider-Man to Jameson's news rags. This serves no purpose higher than to enable you to look at Scales action shots while wrapping fish in old *Bugles*. Just how *does* a putz like Parker get all these exclusive pictures? A while back a second generation mad scientist, one Alistaire Smythe, contended that MJ actually was Spider-Man in a cunning disguise. Intriguing as we find this idea, we admit that MJ and Spidey have been seen together repeatedly. And that's the point.

Item: Just look at this woman's history. Rescued by Spider-Man from the Vulture. Rescued by Spider-Man from the Green Goblin (yes, her old boyfriend). He's continually there to rescue her from one costumed crook after another. Isn't it obvious? Watson-Parker and Spider-Man have been having an affair for years. She just married Parker for appearance's sake, and Spider-Man gives him exclusives to keep the dweeb quiet.

And this is the idol of the young women of America. Ms. Watson-Parker, have you not a shred of decency?

◆ ◆ ◆

Morale has sunk to new depths at the troubled New York-based multinational corporation Oracle, Inc. "'Sunk' is the right word for it," said one high-level executive, sounding muffled through her undersea breathing apparatus. Ever since Namor McKenzie, a.k.a. the Sub-Mariner, former Prince of Atlantis, came publicly forward as owner of Oracle, he has forced his executives to indulge some rather odd whims. "For one thing," our informant said, "he conducts all his business meetings in his indoor swimming pool. Says he feels more comfortable that way."

"Then there are the buffets at company parties," complained another staff member, now having his stomach pumped. "We all got used to the raw fish. But then he started serving lobsters and crabs. Without killing them first."

"And sometimes," whispered a secretary, "you get the feeling that Mr. McKenzie just isn't all there. He suffers from oxygen imbalances in his blood, so sometimes he's, well, a prince of a fellow, and then the next minute he's raving about leveling Manhattan." A staff lawyer added, "He's also got these constant memory lapses, but I don't really mind them. I worked with President Reagan, after all."

No more popular than McKenzie is Oracle second-in-command Namorita Prentiss, the Bossman's young cousin. "I mean, she's still a college student!" protested one former intern. "She's giving us orders in between cramming for her midterms!"

However, this anonymous intern did say he appreciates the fact that Namorita apparently considers the bikini to be proper business attire. Still, he's been embittered ever since he was shunted aside in favor of this fall's new intern, a friend of Namorita's. "He just bounces around the office banging into things! What a goofball!" Well, he got the name half right.

◆ ◆ ◆

The short-lived Symkarian Tourist Board apparently and understandably ran into big-time image problems in 1992. Come to beautiful Symkaria, they said. See our majestic snow-covered mountains ... our peaceful forests ... our charming peasants ... our bloodthirsty commandos.

It appears that tourists are rather averse to traveling to a country whose best known citizen is cold blooded mercenary Sil

SUPER POOP

Continued

ver Sable. Survey after survey shows that when people think of Symkaria, they con ure up the image of a woman wearing a dress slit up to the armpit and spraying bul ets from a machine gun. "It's Dynasty meets The Dirty Dozen," said one travel agent. "Not the sort of place to get away from it all."

Under pressure from the Symkarian Tourist Board, Sable grumblingly agreed to try to change her public image. Thus she appeared at a (thus-far unaired) taping of the *Regis and Kathie Lee* show dressed as a traditional Symkarian shepherdess, com plete with bonnet, apron, and flower-pat terned skirt. Serving Symkarian cookies to the hosts, Ms. Sable proceeded to demon strate a folk dance ("The Jolly Milkmaid's Mazurka") and wowed the audience with her skills at yodeling.

Unfortunately, one of the cameramen proved to be Sable's ex-husband, the For eigner, in disguise, who charged towards her with a broadsword. Silver whipped a miniature machine gun out from under her skirt and was soon spraying the entire stu dio audience with bullets.

The Symkarian Tourist Board was disbanded the next day. Their last press release recommended tourists go instead to nearby Latveria, where it's safer.

OTHER SUPER HEROES WHO SHOULD GO TO JAIL

As followers of the New Warriors know, the American injus tice system recently came to its senses this year and threw costumed juvenile delinquent Marvel Boy into the Col orado super slammer known as the Vault. Not even we at MARVEL YEAR-IN-REVIEW '92 can find anything to laugh at in the unfortunate death of Marvel Boy's father — and believe us, we tried — but we've long thought that the kid need ed to be locked up just on general principle. The name "Marvel Boy" is bad enough, but the fact that he's actually Marvel Boy II, having swiped his code name from a loser of the 1950s, should be enough to add incarceration to injury.

But why stop with Marvel Boy? We can think of plenty of other supposed heroes who could form a super chain gang with him. Who? Glad you asked.

1) THE PUNISHER. Do we really have to *explain* this one? Doesn't it bother any of you that the rule of law, the value of life, the potential for redemption in every human soul aren't even afterthoughts to this guy? *No?* Well, what about the fact that *he provides work for Dolph Lundgren?* Ah, *that* did it.

2) GHOST RIDER. Okay, so he doesn't kill people; he just beats them to a pulp with his chain and then charbroils them. This, we understand, makes him the Mother Teresa of vigilantes. But still, the freak not only constantly breaks the motorcycle Helmet Law — he breaks the Skin and Flesh Law.

3) NOMAD. Let us get this straight. He decides this pros titute is an unfit mother, so he takes her kid on a cross-country bike on his back, stopping occasionally to engage in shootouts with criminals even scummier than himself. Oh, okay.

4) THE NEW WARRIORS. When a normal teenager "borrows" his dad's car without permission and then ends up getting it smashed up or stolen, he's grounded for months.

Ah, but when the New Warriors steal an Avengers Quin jet, causing a loss of *three quarters of a billion dollars* in damage and theft, they get off with nothing more than Captain America's Disapproving Look #7. And hey, everybody, let's ignore the fact that since Namorita is an Atlantean princess and the U.N. owns the Quinjet, stealing it was tantamount to an act of war. No problemo, dudes!

5) TERROR. Guilty of being totally disgusting. Here's a guy you don't want to lend a hand to — he attaches body parts of dead people to himself. There ought be a law.

6) WOLVERINE. You know, we never thought we'd see the day when the most macho man in superherodom is a little guy who scratches you with his nails. Professor Xavier says he enrolled Wolverine in the X-Men to try to control Wolvie's killer instinct. Wake up and smell the corpses, Chuck: *it's not working.*

7) IRON MAN. Ever notice that almost all of Iron Man's major opponents have been affiliated with Stark Enterprises' business rivals Roxxon Oil, Stane International, the Brand Corporation, CordCo, to name a few — and that the common result of a confrontation between Iron Man and these opponents is the demolition or destruction of the rival corporation's assets? We did.

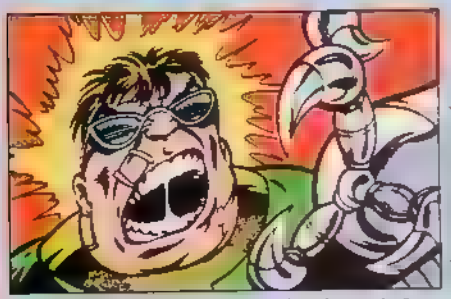
8) CABLE. Annoying for many of the same reasons as the Punisher, but most especially for his name. Is it really that much cooler than "Broadcast"?

The list just goes on and on. In fact, maybe all super heroes belong in jail. The only exception we can think of is Spider-Man. After all, he performs a genuine public service — annoying J. Jonah Jameson. And besides, if Spidey got tossed in jail, we'd only end up with yet another Spider-Book to buy every month: THE IMPRISONED SPIDER-MAN.

— Peter Sanderson

HIT & RUN

OTTO OCTAVIUS



This man is a genius. What does that say about the rest of us?

[We thought we'd have to go to the Vault to find Dr Otto Octavius, better known as Doctor Octopus — but as luck would have it, we ran into him in Las Vegas, waiting for his ride back to the Vault.]

MYIR: **That looks really painful, Doc. And I bet those adamantium shackles pinch.**

Octavius: What do you want, young man?

MYIR: **It's been a rough year for you, Doc. You re-formed the Sinister Six, broke into another dimension, reaped a haul of *serious* hi-tech weapons, became a cross-dimensional mass murderer — and then Spider-Man messed everything up. Doesn't that cheese you off?**

Octavius: Of course not. A man of *my* brilliance doesn't lose control.

MYIR: **But still — you couldn't get a break. You came to Vegas, got hammered by the Hulk—**

Octavius: A mere setback. All taken into account in my master plan. Don't try to comprehend — you'll only look foolish.

MYIR: **Well, let me take a shot. What you're saying, Doc, is that things may look bleak — but the truth is, you're a genius and we just don't understand?**

Octavius: Exactly. To an intellect like mine, my actions are crystal clear.

MYIR: **So ... if Carl Sagan or Stephen Hawking were as smart as you, they wouldn't waste their time with brilliant discoveries, fame, wealth and respect — they'd dress up in tights instead —**

Octavius: What? Why, you —

MYIR: —and get beaten up by Speedball?

Octavius: You're on my list. You hear me — *on my list!* You'll all die! First Spider-Man, then the Sandman, then the Hulk —

MYIR: **Say, look, Doc — your ride's here. I hope they don't make you sit next to the Rhino again.**

Fakes, Fangs AND Fabrications

(continued from page 18)

an Atlantean woman who may be his mother, Princess Fen, who therefore (all together now!) is Not Really Dead. (Is anybody really dead? We're starting to wonder about Abraham Lincoln.) And she looked pretty darn hot for a woman who's pushing a hundred years old. People's moms didn't look like that when we were growing up. Okay, even *apart* from having blue skin.)

Is there was the 1950's Captain America, who even underwent plastic surgery so he'd look exactly like Cap. Cap-ain America's evil twin. And the Red Skull had his mind transferred into a body. Arnim Zola cloned from Cap, so the Red Skull is also Cap's evil twin? Or, at least he was till he was exposed to his first-ever death in CAP #350 and got a red skull for a head.

In NEW WARRIORS #25 Marvel Boy finally got sentenced to prison where he started making license plates dekanetically.

Pim.

Let's get this straight. Wolverine's kind-hearted, shy and returning fiancée Martiko is actually the female head of a criminal vivisection syndicate in a country so notoriously sexist as Japan. Only in the X-Books could a thing like this happen, folks. And no, we're not going to make jokes about her death. 'Cause she's Not Really Dead, anyway.

In issue #26 the New Warriors forcibly tried to bust Marvel Boy out of the hands of the authorities. [illegible], they claimed the Kree made them do it. Oh, you don't believe that one? Okay, how's this: the New Warriors' evil doppelgangers arrived a month early. (These doppelgangers really have some kind of timing problem — oh, wait, we were right — they must have been fashionably *early*.)

The Magus, Adam Warlock's own evil twin, showed up with an evil twin of Thanos (and there's an oxymoron right there: shouldn't Thanos's evil twin be good?), and started unleashing evil on the rest of all of Earth. Fans ran *en masse* to doctors complaining that they were [illegible] double. Doctors replied that [illegible] been reading too many comic books. Comics sales plummeted. The Marvel editorial staff started taking [illegible] unhandling from the Kingpin. Comic stores throughout the country collapsed. Fandom sank into despair. Then Adam Warlock used the Infinity Gauntlet to turn everything back to the way it was. (And nobody remembers that any of this happened but us. Frightening, isn't it?)

Dr Curt Connors, a.k.a. The [illegible] AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #[illegible] repressed my reptile persona. You suite, doc — now do you mind picking that shedded skin up off my rug? (Bah-*dum*-dum.)

In that same issue two people showed up claiming to be Peter Parker's parents. After they read in the *Wall Street Journal* how much money there is in comics now, they decided to milk Sonny Boy for all he's worth.

In AVENGERS #350 Raza of the Starjammers accepted an assignment to kill the Black Knight. Fellow Starjammer Hepzibah revealed her true vocation as a cheerleader, waving her pom-poms and chanting "Go, go, [illegible] L-L-L Knight!" No wonder Pogo dumped her.

Sersi came on to the Black Knight. She always went for guys with long [illegible]

In AVENGERS #351 Beverly [illegible] the next month, 78 Avengers fans charged with traffic violations told judges that the Kree prevented them from seeing any red lights. The defendants are up for parole sometime in 1997.

Cap got turned into a big doggie in [illegible] #405. Now when he throws his shield, he can play fetch with himself. ("Hey, if you put this issue in a mylar snug, does that make it a Doggie Bag?")

You know, this type is so small that reading it is bound to be bad for your eyes. You see, your mothers were right: reading comics *will* (among other things) make you go blind.

Daredevil, the Punisher, Nomad and Terror all converged on Las Vegas, where predictably every Marvel crimelord had gathered to divvy up the Kingpin's empire, play the slot machines, and see Siegfried and Roy. One of their tigers bit Philippe Bazin. The Punisher passed the time by killing various lounge singers for mangling Beatles songs.

In issue #44 of his book, Doctor Strange and the Juggernaut encountered the mystical entity Cyttorak, who captured Dan Quayle and forced him to try to spell his name. "S. E. T. H. uhh. H?")

And then there was the time that the Jackal created a clone of Spider-Man [illegible] to fight. And, since he wears Spidey's old black costume, Venom sort of looks like Spidey's evil twin, too.

After Martiko's death, Wolverine needed someone to cheer him up. Instead, he got to hang out with Terror, a vigilante who steals body parts and attaches them to himself. This is like spending your summer vacation locked in a morgue. Terror, man, while you're collecting body parts, did it ever occur to you to get yourself a new *face*?

So the FF invited all their super-hero buddies over for a big party, and then one of those crazy doppelgangers set off a nuclear bomb. "What did you say? WHAT? I can't hear you! Don't you hate it when the bombs at a party are so loud you can't hear what anybody's say-?"

GHOST RIDER #28 kicked off the "Rise of the Midnight Sons" storyline, in which the Earth was in deadly danger (yes, again) from none other than ...

Fakes, Fangs AND Fabrications

(continued from page 21)

Lilith. How a psychologist character from *Cheers* can imperil the world was left unclear.

Pu

QUESTPROBE's Chief Examiner returned in QUASAR #37 and subjected Quasar's girlfriend, Kayla Ballantine, to a double-length SAT.

Spragg the Living Hill returned in SHE HULK #41-42. You know the great thing about Spragg is that he's the one Marvel character *anyone* can draw. Try it yourself. (Now we'll get all these submissions for SPRAGG limited series, watch.

Then SHE HULK supporting character Weezi Mason went on strike and successfully forced John Byrne to draw her to look less fat. This set a dangerous precedent. The Blob, Kingpin and Doctor Octopus are rumored to be talking with their own labor representatives.

Silver Sable and her ex-husband, the Foreigner, continued their merry efforts to kill each other. And you thought watching *Divorce Court* was fun.

John Blaze, the original Ghost Rider, found out how much the new GHOST RIDER book is selling and realized he retired way too early. So he teamed up with the new Ghost Rider in SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE, the strangest buddy book of them all.

Dear, sweet, mentally unstable Betty Brant, Spidey's first love, got a makeover for the Nineties in WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #91-92: bare midriff, commando headband, and a big gun. Doesn't look much like her high school yearbook photo anymore, does she, kids? (Not that we're *complaining*.)

Alpha Flight's junior team, Gamma Flight, was promoted to Beta Flight in #112. That's nice, but getting a raise and an office with a window would have been better.

Men's movement guru Dredmund the Druid lectured in CAP #406 about discovering the Wild Hairy Man (or more appropriately, the Big Furry Doggie) inside every man. Questions arose as to a possible relationship between Iron John, Iron Fist and Iron Man. Meanwhile Cap-Doggie was one step ahead of the pound (and implacable dogcatcher Philippe Bazin).

Here, Cap! *Here*, Cap! Time to go walkies! *That's a good boy!* What a *good* Captain America! You're a *good* Avenger! Yes, you *are*. Sit down! Speak! Roll over! Play dead.

The Crazy Gang set up a Lewis Carroll theme park in EXCALIBUR #54 with Meggan playing Alice. See, they weren't so bad after all. We'll bet all those times they committed crimes in the past, the Kree made them do it.

Three costumed mercenaries, Agent X, Snare, and Turk, decided to work independently so they could get what they deserve in GHOST RIDER #29: Ghost Rider, Beast, and Wolverine pounded the bejeezus out of them. Ghosty and the two X-Men were then awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for exemplary public service.

Oh, shoot! The Guardians of the Galaxy, in a snit over being left out of this fist, journeyed to 1992 just in time to save Avengers Mansion from Doc Ock's new version (#5 if you're counting) of the Masters of Evil. Now is this *really* truth in advertising? Can they *really* be masters of every kind of evil? For one thing, as far as we know, none of them have ever gone into politics.

Tony Stark was declared dead (sort of) in IRON MAN #284 and James Rhodes took over as Iron Man. Tony's body was placed in a suspended animation chamber right next to Walt Disney's. *Now* it's a race.

Morbius the Living Vampire decided that if he has to kill people for their blood, he might as well kill people who are Bad Guys. Um, shouldn't they be read their rights and allowed a phone call first?

Speaking of killing Bad Guys:

P

The Contemplator told Quasar that he (the Contemplator) has an evil twin impersonating him in past SILVER SURFER stories. Hey, Cont, who doesn't?

Xemnu the Teddy Bear returned in SHE HULK #43 and was immediately sent into hibernation by a well-placed blow with a handy wrench. Thank God.

Silver Sable had a nice dinner with her good buddy Doctor Doom. So *what* if he's tried to take over the world several dozen times and has no respect for the sanctity of human life? He has an excellent wine cellar! And what a nice manners! (Silver's a Nazi hunter by trade, right? Just checking.)

Nova, too, not the New Warrior the other one, got a job as a performer at an extraterrestrial strip joint, in SILVER SURFER #72. The fact that she doesn't wear any clothes to begin with is either a handicap to her performance or a sign that she believes in cutting to the chase.

Mysterious longtime X-Factor buddie Mister Tolliver finally got killed (yeah, right) in X-FORCE #15. But wait a minute! Who *was* that guy, anyway?

The Grim Reaper turned up in AVENGERS #352-354 and attacked the Avengers with spectres of their old foes. Wow, that hadn't happened to them for a whole five issues!

The Grim Reaper's demonic ally Lucifer captured Dan Quayle and forced him to try to spell his name. ("I Y ...mm G E.")

In his own limited series, Cable confronted Stryfe, and — oh no! Another evil twin.

In issue #408, Canine America was finally turned back into a human being, but he still kept sniffing around fire hydrants. Meanwhile, Cutthroat got his throat cut. See *here*.

It was finally made clear in EXCALIBUR #55 — four years after the fact

Losers!

It's bad enough that there are so many lame super heroes running, jumping, flying and teleporting around the universe, but there seems to be an even larger number of lame super-villains. They dress up in garish costumes (the Gamecock and Black Talon, for example, favor dressing like chickens), give themselves pretentious names ("Doctor Nemesis!" — ooh, *I'm* scared), and have their butts handed to them year after year by the super heroes. And it never sinks in that maybe, just maybe, they're in the wrong line of work.

Why do these Losers keep at it? To find out I had Dr. H. M. Virgil, a psychotherapist specializing in treating super-villains, act as my guide through the costumed criminals' secret hangout known as the Bar with No Name, located in scenic Springdale, Connecticut.

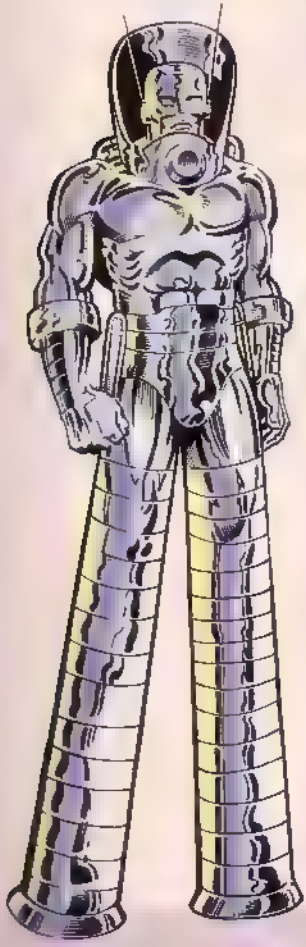
"No one really knows who founded the first Bar with No Name," Dr. Virgil tells me, "but now there's a whole chain catering to super-villains across the country. This particular bar is run by Jolly Roger and originally catered to local Speedball villains. You know, like the Basher, the Feathered Felon, the Harlequin Hit Men. But now they're getting lots of customers from New York City, too. I think the drawing point is the unique trophy room here, featuring pieces torn off super heroes

costumes and other memorabilia. The owners are especially proud of the latest addition to our decor..." He points to the corner, in which stands the towering figure of Tomazooma, the giant robot who fought the Fantastic Four — and lost. The robot's face has been replaced with a clock, chimes hang from the sides of his head, and there's a door in his chest.

"When he sounds the hour, a human-sized cuckoo comes out of his chest," comments Humbug, strolling by. "That ought to prove we evil scientists can do more than design doomsday weapons," he adds, more than a little self defensively.

"I had heard that a whole pack of super-villains were killed at a bar out in the Midwest a while back," I venture, hoping to start a conversation.

The bartender, the Basher himself, looks up with panic in his eye. "Keep your voice down! All right, it's true that Scourge, the vigilante who kills, uh, unemployed super-villains, did get into that bar. But all the other bars in the chain have tightened security. He'll never even find us now," the Basher reassures me and every other panicked super-villain within earshot. "Here, sit down and enjoy the show."



It's impressive in a tacky way. The Jester does his stand up routine while the band, led by Johnny Guitar and Doctor Sax (fought Dazzler; lost), mercifully take a break.

"Is that the same Jester who fought Daredevil?" I ask.

The Ringer (fought Cloak & Dagger; lost) arrives with our beers. "No, sir. He's like me, a second generation super villain. The original Jester —" his voice sinks to a whisper, "— got out of the business."

The audience, all in garish costume, listen to the second generation Jester with mild interest. "They're really waiting for the next act," the Ringer informs me. "Dansen Macabre and her Exotic Dance Troupe."

"I don't recognize any of these villains," I tell Virgil.

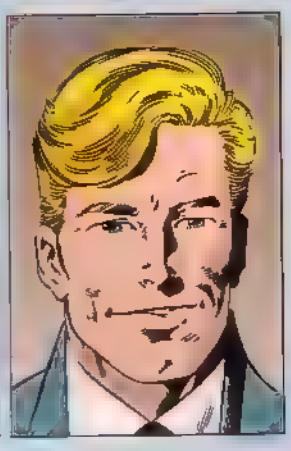
"To be blunt," he whispers, "if they were top criminals they wouldn't be wasting their time here. But they're all in different phases of professional and psychological decline. There are different stages of becoming a true Loser. First is disbelief. Take that fellow over there..."

Virgil points to a man in a black and-white costume slamming the table with his fist and shouting at his bewildered date. "I was Spider

(Continued on Page 24)

HIT & RUN

BLAKE TOWER



Come on, Blake. You can tell us.

[After a busy day at Foley Square, we caught up to Manhattan District Attorney Blake Tower at one of his favorite haunts...]

MYIR: **Dining alone, counselor?**

Tower: Just going over some case notes. I get tired of having sandwiches sent up. What can I do for you?

MYIR: **Well, Mr. Tower, we were wondering — you're tall, blond, drop-dead handsome, wealthy, young and if you'll pardon the expression, built like a Mack truck. You've even got blue eyes, wavy blond hair and that cleft in your chin —**

Tower: Uh, I'm flattered, but — is this leading somewhere?

MYIR: Yes. Which one are you?

Tower: Which — ?

MYIR: **Captain America? Daredevil? You can't be Hawkeye — he spends too much time out west. But you've just *got* to be one of them. One of the mutant heroes, maybe?**

Tower: This is entirely —

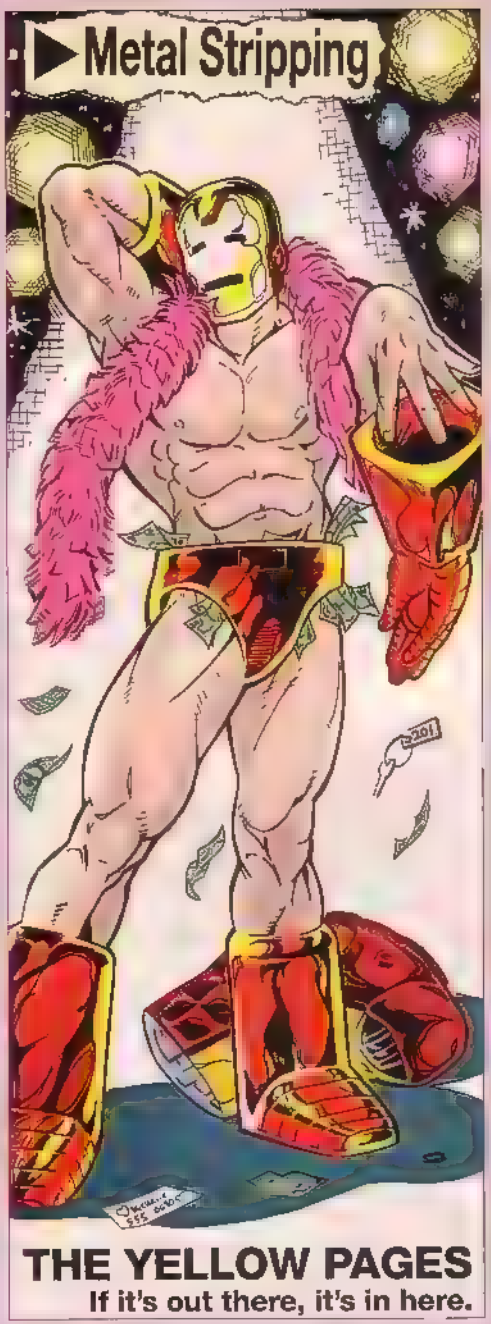
MYIR: **Say — have you and Spider-Man ever been photographed together?**

Tower: This interview is over! Do you understand?!

MYIR: **Oh, absolutely, counselor. And sir?**

Tower: What?

MYIR: **Don't worry about a thing — your secret's safe with us.**



Losers!

(Continued from Page 17)

Man's greatest adversary in years," he insists. "I'm twice as tough as that Venom guy! They'll ask me back, you just watch."

"I'm sure they will," ventures his date, Ms. Modok. "Uh, what was the name again?"

"The Spot! S-P-O-T!! I fought the spectacular Spider-Man!"

"Then there's denial," Virgil continues. "And I think the Jester has just targeted a prime example..."

"And speaking of throwing the bull," the Jester insists, "I see we have a celebrity in our audience tonight. Ladies and gentlemen — if there are any here — allow me to present Daredevil's most ludicrous adversary ever, the Matador!"

"Oh, thank God," I overhear Stilt Man whisper to Leap-Frog. "He didn't see us."

"For those of you who are unaware of Matt's claim to fame," the Jester goes on, "he used the fluttering of his cape to try to drown out Daredevil's super-hearing." The audience gasps in mock awe.

The Matador looks up from the table where he had been busy entertaining a party consisting of his date, Bova, and their friends the Man Bull, the Minotaur, and El Toro Rojo. "Senor Jester, you are speaking to one of the most dangerous men alive." Matador warns. "But I am not unmerciful, so I will give you three seconds to apologize to me and my date."

"I agree," the Jester agrees. "Ma'am, I'm sorry you couldn't do better on a Saturday night than this Loser."

"I've had enough of your disrespect, senor." The Matador stands up on his table and holds out his cape, to a collective groan from the audience. "En garde!"

The Jester raises his index fingers to his brow as if they're horns and charges at the Matador — then stops at the last moment, whips out a yo-yo, and throws it at the Matador's forehead. The Spaniard is knocked cold, to enthusiastic applause.

Virgil continues his shpiel. "Most of the customers here, however, have moved on from denial to just plain anger."

"These young guys look down their cowls at us, but at least people still remember us," growls the Flying Tiger. "Well, maybe not the Matador, but they remember a lot of us. I'll tell you, kid, the real story here is the Losers of the Future. Every young punk thinks he can be a super-villain these days! In the old days we'd go to the Convention with No Name and the kids would just want our autographs. But now they all show up with their portfolios showing off their costume and weapon designs. They all hope they can break into the Serpent Society or the Masters of Evil or maybe start their own gang and make a fortune."

"Franchise Name No with Bar own their buy even maybe," suggests Drom the Backwards Man.

"There're dozens who turn professional every month and they're hot for a little while," the Flying Tiger contin-

ues, raising his voice, "but they don't have the craft, the style, or the years of experience being beaten up by super heroes that we do.

"Hear, hear," agree the assembled villains, clinking glasses, downing them, and then blasting the glasses to smithereens with their assorted super powers.

"See, sometimes it's not so bad being a Loser." Virgil reassures me. "Of course, there are other ways to accept it." He gestures to a long row of gloomy, silent figures sitting along a table, each wearing a target on his back. "Waiting for Scourge," he whispers almost reverently.

At a loss, I nod mutely, glance at my watch.

"Goodness, look how late it's gotten," Virgil picks up on my body language. "Tomazooma's about to strike midnight. This is always fun to watch."

Tomazooma's hands now point straight upward. The bells on his head sound twelve times, and a door opens in his chest. Out steps a man in a cuckoo suit wearing a large hat and carrying a machine gun.

"Cuckoo," he says. "Justice is served."

"It's Scourge!" everyone shouts, just before the lights go out.

After the hail of gunfire, when I can finally muster the courage to poke my head out from under the bar, I find that the place is deserted, except for the indestructible Madcap. The loon is amusing himself by digging bullets out of his chest with a spoon. "You know," he comments, "in *most* bars, if the management wants the customers to leave, they just stop serving drinks."

— *Peter Sanderson*

Fakes, Fangs and Fabrications

(continued from page 22)

that the otherdimensional fascist dictator Sat-Yr-Nine switched places with Captain Britain's old girlfriend Courtney Ross. (And isn't she married to the head of Time Warner?)

The Punisher ... look, this just isn't funny anymore.

The Morlocks got massacred — again — in UNCANNY X-MEN #293. This time for sure.

Longshot and Dazzler were revealed in X-MEN #11 to be the parents of Shattershot. They will also be shown to be the parents of Western hero Buckshot, DC villain Deadshot, Human Torch stuntkick Hotshot, and drug law enforcer Potshot.

In DARKHOLD #1, Vicki Montesi got sucked into the family business of guarding the Darkhold. The villainous Lilith sought to destroy her by marrying her off to fellow *Cheers* customer Cliff ...

The Magus was defeated and Adam Warlock used the Infinity Gauntlet to put everything back the way it was. And nobody, except us, even remembers how the entire Marvel management and staff and all the freelancers were replaced by evil twins who sold the company to Donald Trump.)

Nova, the cosmic stripper, was killed by Morg the Berzerker, who was apparently tired of mixing her phone number up with the Nova of the New Warriors. Nova of the New Warriors agreed to substitute for her if "The Last Guardian Story" ever gets finished.

We can't believe you're still reading this. We *have* to do this, but you ...?

Cathode, a Japanese collector, stole the Statue of Liberty in SILVER SABLE #6. Man, we don't envy him trying to hide that in his downtown Tokyo apartment.

Have trouble with occult menaces? Call the Nightstalkers, a new team consisting of a wimpy descendant of Dracula, a recovering vampire, and a guy just sprung from the looney bin who throws wooden knives. Hmm. You're right, calling Bill Murray probably would be safer.

All the deities who gave Doctor Strange his magical powers demanded payment for their services, with interest. Doc refused, so they revoked all his credit cards and turned him over to the IRS. Interdimensional Revenue Service, who in turn seized all his possessions. Clea dumped him and started looking for a sorcerer with a steady job. Seeking someone in a similar situation, Doc teamed up with Wilbur Nelson and became a Master of the Country and Western Arts.

Doctor Strange's apprentice, Rintrah, died. The Punisher was nowhere in sight. The Matador went into mourning.

And then there were all these new Brit heroes, like Death's Head II (sounds like a teacher we had once) and Motormouth (sounds like a date we had who wouldn't shut up). Hell's Angels (sounds like another date we had; oh boy, *was* she ...) the Warheads (they called them hawks in the sixties), and the new dark and stormy Knights of Pendragon.

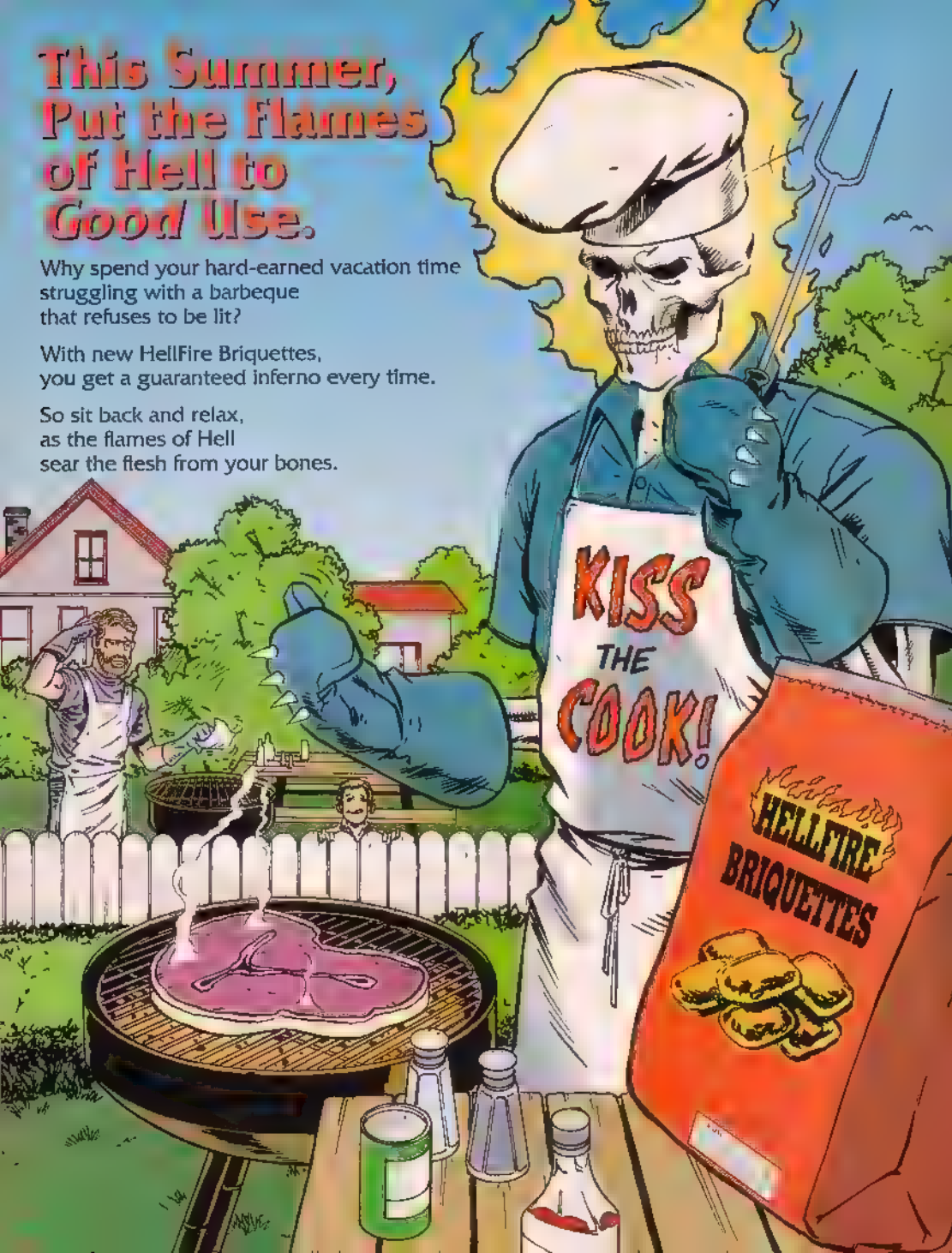
Plus all the new Marvel Futureverse heroes, like Spider-Man 2099, Punisher 2099, Doom 2099, and Ravage 2099. If only we could remember what year their stories are set in.

And the original Thor has apparently spent the whole year tied up in a sack down in Mephisto's realm. It's not that Thor couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag. It's just that he's well aware what's been going on in the Marvel Universe all year and figured that by comparison, life in a bag sitting in the pits of Hell isn't all that bad. (In fact, as comic collectors say, it's super-hot.)

Omigosh. How could we forget the Kazeo Kang storyline in four of this year's annuals? You see, Kang the Conqueror, the time-traveler from the future, is actually several other people as well, including Pharaoh Rama-Tut, the Scarlet Centurion, and Immortus. And there's a good Rama-Tut and an evil twin version of Rama-Tut. Oh, and he might also be Doctor Doom. Is that clear? And every time Kang travels in time he creates a duplicate of himself. Besides them, there are all these aliens who dress up in Kang costumes. So there are probably thousands of Kangs throughout reality, most of whom belong to the Council of Cross-Time Kangs. Still, following us? Oh yes, and Kang's lady love, the Princess Ravonna, also has an evil twin called the Temptress, who used to pose as a double of Nebula. There's probably also an evil twin of Immortus, because in some stories Immortus acts saintly and in others he's a villain. And —

No! Can't ... stand ... it!

Evil twins! They're everywhere!


This Summer, Put the Flames of Hell to Good Use.
Why spend your hard-earned vacation time struggling with a barbeque that refuses to be lit?
With new HellFire Briquettes, you get a guaranteed inferno every time.
So sit back and relax, as the flames of Hell sear the flesh from your bones.
KISS THE COOK!
HELLFIRE BRIQUETTES

COVER STORY

The inside story on today's hottest super heroes:

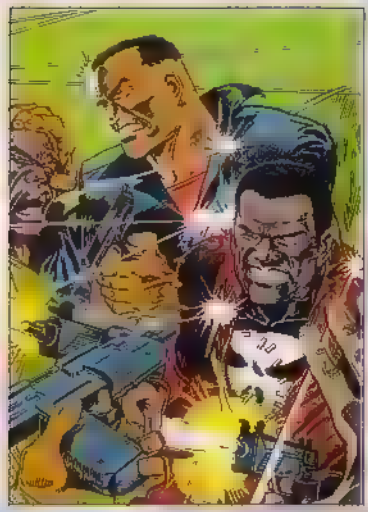
WHY IS THE PUNISHER SO COOL?

OR, "Hey, didn't this guy used to shoot jaywalkers?"

by Tom Brevoort and Mike Kanterovich

There's a new breed of hero on the streets today — one you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. He's tough, rugged, mysterious and brooding. And, chances are, there's a very good reason why he keeps his secrets to himself.

To avoid public ridicule.



"Yo Homey — nobody disses the Punisher!"

For you see, many of today's top-profile megastars began their careers as hastily conceived throw offs, minor league characters who have inexplicably transcended their humble beginnings to become today's hottest heroes. Their names are legend. Wolverine; Deathlok; Ghost Rider; Cage; Morbius, and the list goes on.

What does it take to turn the losers and misanthropes of yesteryear into the superstars of today? We at *Marvel Year-in-Review*, the only publication daring enough to tackle this burning, chafing question, will do our very best to shine some light on this dark and gritty issue. And we'll begin, appropriately enough, with one of the darkest, grittiest success stories of our time.

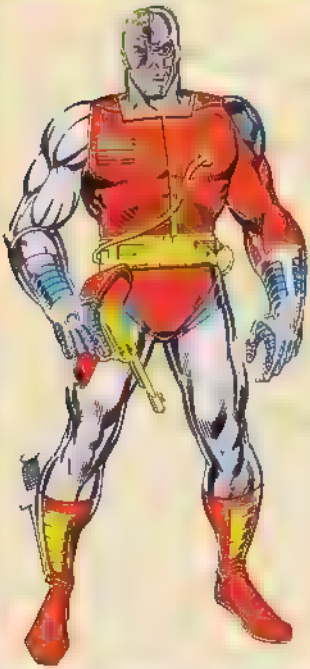
THE PUNISHER

Everyone would agree that Frank Castle is the very model of the driven, hard-bitten vigilante. Cool, professional, self-assured — a tough hero for even tougher times. And yet, this is the very same urban vigilante who began his career by attempting to kill Spider-Man under orders from the Jackal, a crazed pointy-eared super-villain with a penchant for cackling at the top of his lungs. Yeah *here's* a hero who can tell the players without a scorecard.

But don't worry — he *only* shoots the bad guys these days. Really. You can overlook the fact that this is the same consummate soldier who went on a crazed killing spree in the early 80's, taking pot shots at litterbugs and jaywalkers. Oh, sure, he tried to blame it on drugs, but did you really buy that? *Really?*

Unlike most of today's other megastars, the Punisher openly embraces his humble beginnings — in fact, he clings to them, like Linus to his blanket, and pays constant homage to his roots by engaging in at least one thoroughly embarrassing mission a

ANATOMY OF A MAKEOVER: DEATHLOK



PREVAMP

Scary red bionic eye

Organics in constant state of decay (smells bad)

Flag on chest — shows good old conservative values

Inconvenient cable

Small gun — big body count

Primary goal: Surviving in a burnt-out post-apocalyptic world

REVAMP

Soothing yellow bionic eye

Organics held in stasis (smells fresh as a daisy)

No Flag — Wishy-washy liberal

Inconvenient shoulder pads

Big gun — small body count

Primary goal: Regaining his human body so he can go home to the wife and kids

TOMORROW'S REVIVALS TODAY

Not everyone hits a home run the first time up at bat, so we here at *MYIR* have postulated how the passing years might affect some of today's young new stars — and what they'll look like when they're revamped in ten or so years.

DARKHAWK:
Following his bookshelf format relaunch in which an aged Chris Powell comes out of retirement to valiantly fight against a world that passed him by — appropriately titled "Darkhawk Returns" — Darkhawk will cut a movie deal with David Lynch and also get an animated series that bears little or no resemblance to him.

SLEEPWALKER:
A self-referential examination of one man's personal hell, told in heaping gobs of purple prose and stirring internal monologues. Sleepwalker will no longer exist as a character. Instead, he'll be a hallucination on the part of drugged-out mental patient Rick Sheridan, who has spent the last ten years in a government-sponsored sensory-deprivation experiment, and who just wants to wake up.

SILVER SABLE:
The most severe change here will be one of gender. Sable will be brought back as a man, because female characters just don't sell. Other than that, it's business as usual: guns, guns, guns!

TERROR INC.:
This series will now feature the adventures of a tough-as-nails mercenary with a code of honor and a heart of gold, told in a simple, straightforward linear fashion. Terror's ability to make other people's limbs his own will come in handy, as he keeps shattering his arms, legs and spine during the tendon-stretching, bone-breaking, high-octane, all-action double-page spreads.

DEF WARRIORS:
This will be the comic book adaptation of the remake of the cult movie about gang violence, told in an off-the-wall, zany style.

SQUIRE OF GOTHOS:
Now a light-hearted romp, S.Q.V. tells the story of a deceased playboy and his debutante girlfriend, whose wandering specters move in with a typical American family. Pandemonium ensues.

LUKE:
Cage will star in a new series, entitled LUKE. Otherwise, it'll be exactly the same.

ROBOT WARRIORS:
A spinoff of the new Sleepwalker series, in which the title character gets little rest.

BLANKMAN:
This avant-garde experimental title will be printed in black ink on black paper. The first issue comes pre-bagged with a pair of bifocals.

WHAT IF ...?:
This series will be exactly the same, but will be retitled WHO CARES ...?

BRUCE BANNER:
Is still dead.

year. Whether it's temporarily transforming himself into a black man (this year's favorite), or playing substitute teacher at an inner city school, the Punisher has proven that a questionable past need not hinder success, it can actually enhance it! He's even gone so far as to adopt Jigsaw — a decidedly minor league gangster whose only real claim to fame was having fought Spider-Man, the Punisher and Nightcrawler at the same time and walked away in one piece — as his number one bad guy. (And *not* just because Jigsaw's the only enemy the Punisher has who's still alive, either.)

It's a proven fact that the more complex a character's history is, the more popular that character will become. The Punisher is an excellent example of this rule, having become over the years an obsessed Vietnam vet ex-police officer who served in Special Forces during the war *and* who once studied to be a priest. *There's* a guy with a lot of free time on his hands.

WOLVERINE AND PALS

But the best example of this blizzard-of-back-story technique is in its progenitor Wolverine, who was a big fat nothing in the days when he was just a homicidal Canadian wildman. But today — as a hundred year-old homicidal Canadian fast-healing ninja-trained super-spy with a mysterious past that not even he fully understands, an adamantium skeleton that he acquired under uncertain circumstances and old, mortal enemies he's never even heard of crawling under every rock — Wolvie's the hottest name in town! And the back-story doesn't even need to make sense, as Wolverine's illustrates. It can be amended as required, with whole chunks written off as false memories implanted by a sinister schemer! Wolvie's probably fibbing about half that stuff anyway. And why not? *It works!*

Wolverine's teammates have taken his example to heart, and many of them now proudly sport more patchwork in their backgrounds than a vintage pair of 70's blue jeans. Nowhere outside of the X-Men will you find as unlikely a group of individuals: a black goddess ex-thief Morlock chieftain space whale with platinum hair; a British-born Oriental

August '92 ... Peter Merrigan ... literally kicks the X-Men's butts.

master assassin with telepathic powers and mechanical eyes that were a malicious gift from the evil ruler of another dimension; a young telepath who died, was replaced by a sentient force from outer space, and then turned up alive and intact at the bottom of the Hudson River underneath an old mattress — the list goes on and on.

Not bad for a bunch of kids who stumbled around blindly for a year-and-a-half chasing the mysterious Factor Three (sounds like a mouthwash ingredient, doesn't it? "Now with new Factor Three for whiter teeth and fresh breath!"), only to discover that F3 was nothing more than a half-baked collection of their old foes, none of whom had the guts to face the X-Men individually anymore, led by a jellyfishlike alien from Sirius who promptly killed himself once his identity was discovered. Can't say we blame him, really.

Most of the founding members of the X-Men had gone off to pursue solo careers before the group gained its current popularity. Like the Angel, for example. Now here's a success story for you; this guy couldn't make a go of it either as a member of the Champions or the Defenders. He couldn't even get *into* the Avengers, though he kept showing up during their membership drives shouting "Me! Me." In the end, he had to get his wings cut off and paint his body blue to get noticed. A pretty high price to pay.

But the various ex-X-Men have since crawled back with their tails (or various other appendages) between their legs to bask in the reflected glory of the modern popular team and tell everyone that it was all due to them. These guys have forgotten the days when they were so desperate for attention that they invited Spider-Man to join the group, even though he isn't a mutant. (Those strict X-Men segregation guidelines have waned since the old days. Nowadays, they just *tell* everyone all their members are mutants, whether they really are or not, and thus maintain the illusion of exclusivity.) Spidey not only turned them down flat, he beat the snot out of the bunch of 'em for good measure! Now *that* is sad.

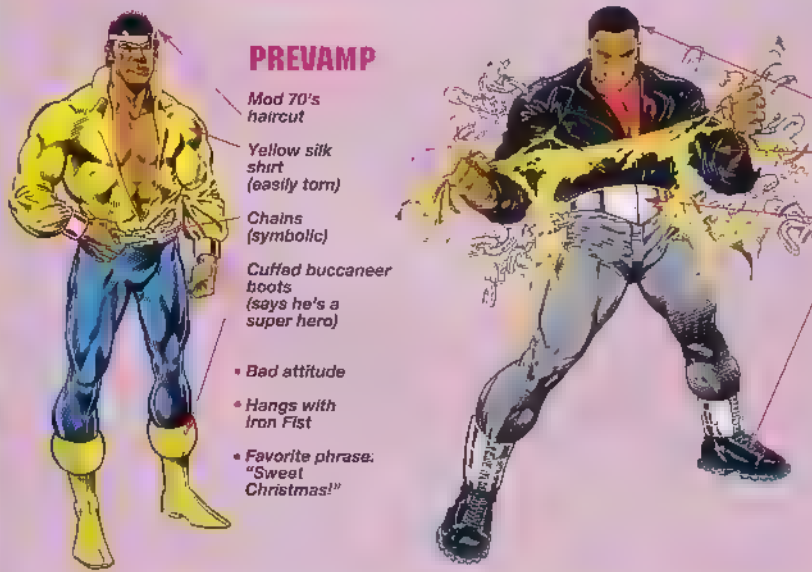
SPIDER-MAN ... AND THE REST

And speaking of Spidey, that ol' perennial favorite is as popular as ever — maybe more so — but these days he does it all and has it all, without having to get his hands dirty. Though he's always been renowned as the hard-luck, working-class hero, Spidey's gone the route of Billy Joel; he now goes home to a wife who's a highly-paid professional model, lives in a luxurious Soho apartment owned by his best friend, has a best-selling book of photographs on the market, and an aunt who's as healthy as a horse. Why, he even got his dead parents back, hale and hearty!

Spidey's biggest worry these days is finding the time to appear in all of his titles, plus guest shots, while working full time for the *Bugle*, studying to get his masters degree, and getting to bed early enough to spend some quality time with the little woman (who seems to possess one of the largest collections of Frederick's of Hollywood night garments in the Western Hemisphere). If that's sufferin', brother, gimme some sufferin'!

But speaking of garments, it's amazing how a small change in wardrobe can make such a big difference where success is concerned. If you're gonna be a big shot, then you gotta dress the part. Ghost Rider spent most of his time fighting bozos like the Orb and trying to regain his cycling title from Flagg Fargo (not to mention being chased by the Hell's Angels every five minutes).

ANATOMY OF A MAKEOVER: LUKE CAGE


PREVAMP
Mod 70's haircut
Yellow silk shirt (easily torn)
Chains (symbolic)
Cuffed buccaneer boots (says he's a super hero)
• Bad attitude
• Hangs with Iron Fist
• Favorite phrase: "Sweet Christmas!"
REVAMP
With-it 80's haircut
Steel-hard Jacket (not easily worn)
Belt (functional)
Huge heavy workman's boots (says he can't run very fast)
• Badder attitude
• Hangs with Dakota North
• Favorite phrase: "Gimme my money — now!"

Morbius: "I use work this grit through my hair and"

But give the man a few spikes and a length of chain and now he means business' Luke Cage was a loser in yellow silk shirts, constantly put upon by the likes of Mr. Fish and continually harassed by his office coffee machine. But throw on a leather jacket and give him a haircut, and, Sweet Christmas, a star is born. Drop a leather bodysuit on Morbius and he goes from fighting aliens on Arcturus to putting the bite on crime in the big city — another "superficial overhaul" success story.

So. To sum up, there are three basic necessities if one is to be perceived as a tough, gritty, street smart hero of the '90s: 1) a big gun, 2) a leather outfit and 3) a mysterious past. And, with a little work and by following these sample rules, even the lowliest third-rate nobody has a shot at the big time! So get ready, because dark-and-gritty revivals of Monarch Starstalker, Dragon Lord, Modred the Mystic, Seeker 3000, Torpedo, the 3-D Man, Bloodstone, Captain Universe, Red Wolf and Night Nurse can't be far off!

Marvel has entered the '90's. Be very afraid.

GRARR! Ready for the 90's

CREATE YOUR OWN HOT NEW MARVEL CHARACTER!

It's not nearly as hard as you'd think. Fill in the blanks in the high-concept top-copy below from the appropriate lists provided.

A(n) ____ who's ____. uses ____ to fight ____ because ____.
Stan Lee presents: ____!

A

- homicidal maniac
- warrior from the future
- gun-toting vigilante
- demon from hell
- killer cyborg
- young mutant
- urban mercenary with a heart of gold
- ordinary pimple-faced teenager

B

- taking the law into his own hands because the system doesn't work
- hated and hounded because he is different
- always on the verge of giving in to his animalistic berserker self
- family was brutally killed by the mob
- always trying to make ends meet
- the best he is at what he does
- got nothing better to do

C

- an amazing arsenal of futuristic weapons
- an arsenal of amazing futuristic weapons
- a futuristic arsenal of amazing weapons
- his razor-sharp claws
- nothin' but his own guts
- big guns
- somebody else's shtick

D

- gangsters
- ninjas
- gangster ninjas
- evil terrorist mutants
- a malevolent demon king
- organized crime
- for truth, justice and the American way
- the battles nobody else can win
- the phone company

E

- with great power comes great responsibility
- with great responsibility comes great power
- with great firepower comes great sales
- with three you get eggroll

F

- Dark
- Night
- Shadow
- The
- Death
- Iron
- Power
- X-
- Ps -
- Wolf

G

- Hawk
- Man
- Raven
- Master
- Wraith
- Stryker
- Stalker
- Wing

CREATE YOUR OWN HOT NEW MARVEL TEAM!

It's even easier. Follow the above instructions seven times. Choose your team's name by looking in the thesaurus under "Fight".

Infernal Correspondence

Compiled by Michael Gallagher

As we saw this past election year, political action committees, special interest groups and paid lobbyists are exerting an ever-increasing influence on not only our politics but on our very way of life.

Even we at Marvel Comics are not exempt from this type of external pressure. Just be glad we ignore it. Here are a few examples of the types of letters we regularly receive from well-meaning people trying to remodel the House of Ideas.

Just Say "Casi-NO"
7-11 Bingo Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio

SKIN GRAPHS
PO BOX 920
CHICAGO IL

Skin Graphs, we pride ours
ng the industry leader in unsolicited data
ssion. Recently, it was brought to
a great disparity in
amount
nformat
bill
our co
payment

WATCHDOG
27 Peachtree Lane Atlanta, GA

WA
27 Peachtree

Dove Tales
7369 Leary Lane • San Francisco, CA

Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York NY 10016

Sirs,

Founded in the Height Ashbury district of San Francisco in 196?, DOVE TALES has always endeavo

Remember the classic
Doves that flourished during
pondering political philosophies,

WK DAWKHAWF, HAWKSHAW
EYE and the thinly veiled
"DOVES" did we discover within
egg

mistaken.
We at DOVE TALES find this tre
distasteful and distressing. How
intrinsic antagonism built into Super
notations, but is excess
power? We think not. Therefore, we hope
you'll be anxious to print the enclosed six-issue
CONTRIBUTION

appearances
rights are negotiated, we would like

Warm Fuzzies, Inc.
1151 Van Cortland Ave
Pleasantville, CT

THE PUNISHER
GHOST RIDER
SHE-HULK

POPPLES,
FOOFUR,
fact, it
seen a
stands

Southpaw Society
"You take what's Right! We'll take What's Left!"

gives all of
any kind
advocates
not

the time

LOCAL 213 **NEW YORK CHAPTER**

Marvel Entertainment Group
387 Park Avenue S
New York NY 10016

Dear Sirs,

I am the legal representative for the Warehouse Workers
of Local 213-New York Chapter). This letter is to
seeking a temporary injunction again
they cease and

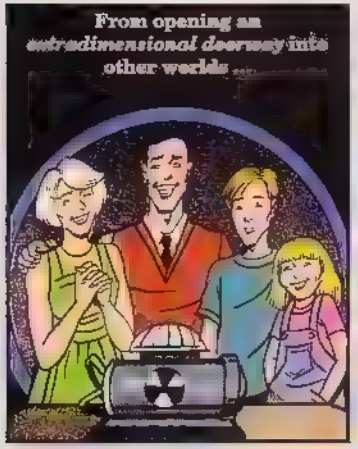
per Heroes engaging
confrontations within the confines of
warehouse. Now while this may seem
device to you,
umbrage at it. In our opinion,
public the impression that either
abandoned because the workers were laid
an industry in trouble, or

Hi, I'm Reed Richards!

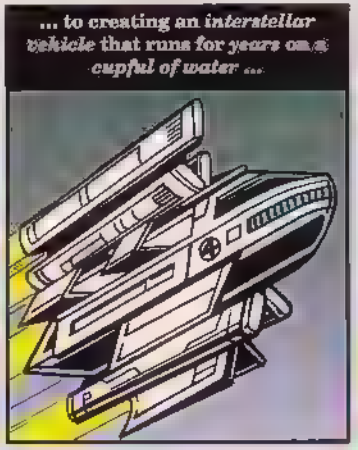
*How many times have you found yourself wishing you could add some **special additions** to your home like your own **antimatter reactor** - but you just can't afford the **time** or **money**? Well, I'll show you how to do it **yourself** – and save a **bundle** in my **brand new series ...***

The Mr. Fantastic Home Improvement Library

In this fabulous sixteen part series, I'll show you all the secrets that have helped me go from Mr Fantastic to Mr Fixit!

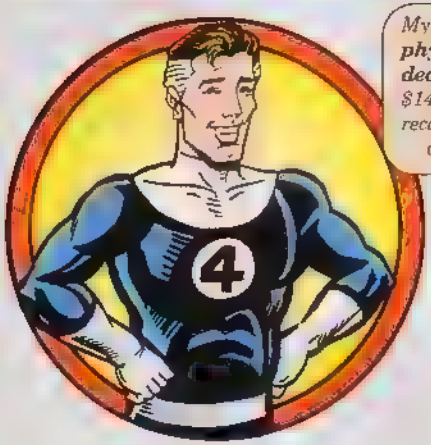


From opening an *extradimensional doorway* into other worlds ...



... to creating an *interstellar vehicle* that runs for *years* on a *cupful of water* ...

... to building a *nuclear fusion generator* that's small enough to fit in your *basement!*



*My **easy-to follow diagrams** will show you the basics of **quantum physics ... temporal reamplification ...** even **building a backyard deck!** Start with your first book, **UNSTABLE MOLECULES**, for just $14 95 plus shipping and handling! Then every other month you'll receive a new volume at the **same low price!** Keep the ones you want cancel anytime!*

Yes! I want to be the envy of major governments. Rush me my first volume, UNSTABLE MOLECULES, for just $14 95! I understand that if I forget to send it back you'll just keep sending me more volumes until I've racked up an enormous debt, at which point you'll try to take me to court. You'd just better hope I haven't figured out how to build a death ray by then, suckers.

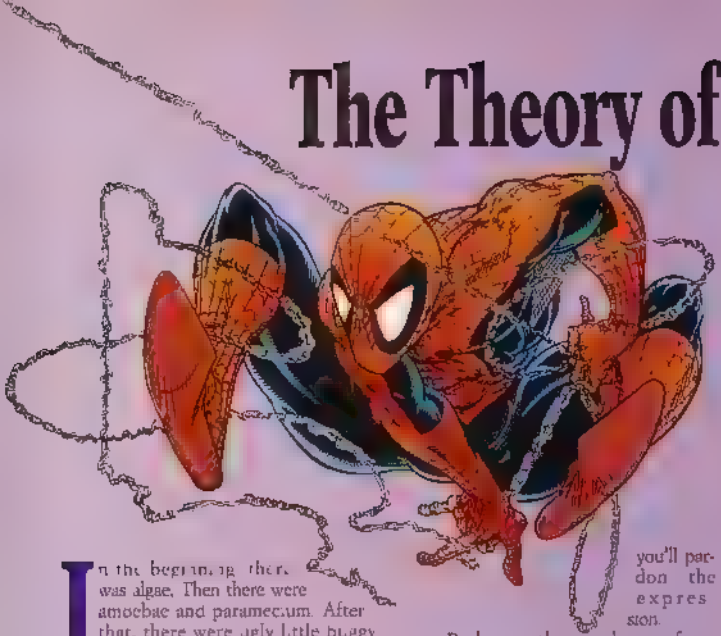
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip

The Theory of Unnatural Selection

What the Darwin is going on?



In the beginning there was algae. Then there were amoebae and paramecium. After that, there were ugly little buggy things that crawled along the bottom of the sea, and then dinosaurs, and then mammals. Eventually, primates blossomed into humankind, which in turn spawned the Trapster and Squirrel Girl.

Until recently, scientists had thought that we had beaten out evolution and Darwin's theory of natural selection through the use of technology, so that people with all kinds of disabilities could survive. They thought we had reached an evolutionary stasis.

But new evidence has arisen indicating that super heroes are evolving — or at least *changing* — at an extremely accelerated rate. While there are many theories, no one is sure why these superhumans are mutating at all, and many are concerned as to what this really means for the future of Spandex.

The whites of their eyes

Not too long ago, mutants like Cable, Wolverine and Storm had pupils and irises just like the rest of us do. Now their eyes are often Little-Orphan-Annie white, reverting to their former human state only once in a while. Eye specialists are baffled as to how these super heroes actually *see*. As leading ophthalmologist Dr. Iris Ganglia puts it, "I can't wait to dissect one of those babies." On one hand, she might find a whole new way of seeing. On the other, she might find a slimy, empty husk. Not a pretty sight, if you'll pardon the expression.

Perhaps a thousand years from now, we'll see only completely eyeless super heroes roaming the streets. Having eyes will be seen as a weakness, and result in grotesque cosmetic operations. (Frankly, we can't wait.)

Burden of muscles

Professional tough guy Wolverine has apparently changed from a lean fighting machine to a hunched, boar-like behemoth (see following page). Professional bodybuilding trainers aren't sure how he can bend his arms or move his head without his bulbous musculature getting in the way. Even more mysterious is the fact that Wolverine's skeletal structure can support his giant muscles while fighting Canadian ninjas and the like. Kurt "Headlock" Schwer, manager of world-famous wrestler Beautiful Boy Boz, showed more concern than confusion: "I know those protein drinks work, but man, you gotta know when to *stop*."

One of the more educated theories on the matter suggests that this strange growth in muscle tissue is a progression connected with Wolverine's healing factor. If that's true, a thousand years from now we might have near immobile super heroes. It won't help the crime-fighting trade too much, but photo ops will be a breeze.

Disjointed

The opposite phenomenon has happened to wacky web-spewing crimefighter Spider-Man. It appears that evolution has traded in Spider-Man's human joints for ultra-flexo-super-bendi-double-contacto joints. They haven't really made him a better crimefighter, but doesn't he look *cool*?

"It's a bizarre phenomenon," marvels New York sports orthopedic surgeon Dr. Otto Porosis. "I've seen Spidey in action outside my window, and I really don't understand how he bends his joints like that without causing intense damage." But Porosis, who is also a comic book maven, seems a less-than-impartial judge of the web-chucker's new anatomy. "I've thought it over, and I don't think he's had joint implants put in to gain greater flexibility. Those look too *cool* to be fake."

But if these ultra-flexo-super-bendi-double-contacto joints do snowball from one generation to the next, we'll someday

have super heroes swinging through the air in such *cool* poses the villains will all stop killing and plundering just to watch them pass.

Those special changes

The evidence is almost overwhelming. Her muscle tone has expanded beyond the champion female bodybuilder range. Her shoulders are widening, her hips narrowing. You guessed it: Mind Gem guardian Moondragon is becoming a man. Or at least some sort of hermaphrodite.

As she is one of the first to have these developments,' we can only assume (and hope) she is going through a real identity crisis. "Although I have not met Moondragon personally," admits infamous sex therapist Dr. Ruth Weisenheimer, "I find myself concerned for her sexual well-being, and hope that she is not suffering too intense a trauma. I know that willing transsexuals often have a terrible time confronting their special changes — just think how an *unwilling* transsexual might feel ..." Actually, let's *not* think about it.

Before

After

While Moondragon appears to be becoming a man, a propensity of male heroes seem to lack something in their own, ah, special areas. While they don't talk about it — or the lack of "it" — this anatomy anomaly has certainly been noticed. In sexologist Dr. Ignasio Prostato's new book, *Sex Lives of the Super Heroes*, Prostato claims that "the greatest challenge for a super hero is finding time for intimacy, and when he finds that, he will be the most super man on earth."

Perhaps our heroes are so out of touch with their sensuality that their, ah, apparatus are getting smaller and smaller. Someone really ought to sponsor a Super Love-In or something — it may not be too late.

It's not the size of the hands, it's what they carry

His thighs are twice as wide as his waist, and his hands are the size of small spatulas — but his chest looks about as wide as your average billboard. No one seems to know what's happened to cyber-warrior Cable. His feet are about the same size as his puny hands, but they must support about 450 pounds of unidentified flesh matter, metal, and puffy clothes.

In a human being, the brain is supposed to account for about 10% of the total body mass. Cable's skull could only hold a quarter of that, and even then you're probably talking leaky ears. Maybe Cable was born this way. We have questioned orthopedic physicians, physical therapists, weight training supervisors, professional wrestlers ... we even wrote to Ann Landers. They universally look at the photos of Cable and stare blankly. The more educated say, "No comment until further study is made." The less proud ask, "How does he hold such a big gun in such a little hand? Wait ... that *is* his hand, right?"

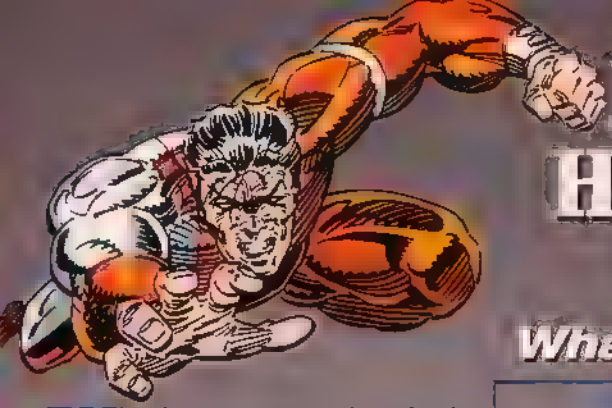
Easily the most grotesque of these new superhumans, Cable shows us the bottom line on the subject. No one really knows for sure how or why evolution has suddenly decided to make a left turn at super heroes, but we're starting to get some ideas.

The shape of things to come

Certain strange people, including renowned UFO researcher Jack Valley, believe that alien genes have been secretly inserted into super hero DNA strings, allowing for deviant anatomical structures and restructuring. Slowly and painlessly, our heroes are becoming less and less human, as they receive alien messages on a cellular level. Possibly, a hundred or a thousand years from now when super heroes realize that they are not only superhuman, but *not human at all*, we'll be slaves to giant eyeless overmuscular women/men who sit on extra wide chairs in their gardens, drinking tea from tiny tea cups and blowing away gophers with their giant guns ...

Yup. We're doomed.

— Sonja Ratcliffe



Northstar's Hair-Raising Revelation

What's the big deal?

When the famous Olympic athlete, Canadian superhuman and Alpha Flight founding member Jean Paul Beaubier made an impassioned revelation in the midst of battle through downtown Toronto last March for some reason every major news agency in the civilized world leapt upon it like piranha on a side of beef.

So Northstar is gay — this is news?

Well, apparently these days it is, along with Vice Presidents misspelling vegetables and epileptics having seizures in response to Mary Hart's voice. But the media furor over Northstar's idiotically obvious statement was so overwhelming that at the Canadian super guy's press conference, many of us journalists were forced to sit almost out of earshot.

Until now, the superhuman community seemed immune to the effects of social peer pressure, at least so far as it related to their hair. Everyone's known for years that Fantastic Four leader Reed Richards is partially gray, as is his evil-looking twin brother, Nick Fury. Then you've got the all-white mutant squad: Magneto, Cable, Quicksilver ... heck, a contact deep within Wilson Fisk's organization implied that the totally bald Kingpin of Crime is really a closet gray who shaves his head to conceal the truth. (Course, I don't recommend asking Willie about that to his face.)

So again ... what's the big deal? Psylocke goes from being a purple-haired Brit to a blue-haired Oriental and no one bats a lash. The Hulk's skin changes from green to gray to green and the media collectively yawn. But, hey, a second string super hero like Northstar tells everyone he doesn't use Grecian Formula and suddenly it's circus time.

Sean Larkin, noted Toronto-area hair stylist and tonsorial spokesman with the "Silver Grail" salon chain thinks he has the answer to this puzzling situation. "While the loss of hair color is becoming more and more accepted in our culture, it's still considered by some to be a major *faux pas* to mention it in mixed company." Uh-huh. Right. Let's ask someone *else*'s opinion.

"Before the public statement, people just thought he was an arrogant celebrity," noted Toronto media consultant Mark Asquith. Ahh ... now we're getting somewhere. The media hoopla obviously must have been due to the resounding revelation — Northstar is really a *courageous* arrogant celebrity.

-- Steve Saffel

Peer Perplexity

Marvel Year In Review contacted a few of Northstar's peers — other muscular guys who wear tights in public — to get their reactions to this raving controversy. Their responses were less than illuminating. In fact, most of them seemed more confused than anything else by the whole thing.

Captain America

MYIR: Do you feel there is any problem with Northstar's decision to remain gray in the face of public opinion?

CA: Did you say —

MYIR: Yes, do you feel he should be forced to conform?

CA: Of course not. It is every man or woman's inalienable right to maintain whatever lifestyle they wish, so long as it does not infringe upon the personal freedom of any other person.

MYIR: So you feel freedom of hair color is guaranteed in the Constitution.

CA: Yes, I — wait, *what* did you say?

MYIR: Thank you, Captain.

USAgent

MYIR: What is your response to the uproar over Northstar's revelation that he is gray?

USA: Gray. Ohhhh ... so *that* was the problem. Well, that's just the kind of cruel I'd expect from a Canadian, especially a French Canadian. No real American would be caught dead worrying so much about his hair. If you want to look like a real man, you just use a little chemical enhancement. President Reagan proved that!

MYIR: Uh ... right. Thank you.

Reed Richards

MYIR: Do you feel Northstar's gray hair presents any real problem in his line of work?

RR: His what?

MYIR: His gray hair.

RR: His...

MYIR: *Gray hair*. Dr. Richards, do you have a hearing problem?

RR: No, no, it's just that I expected you to say —

MYIR: The *question*, Dr. Richards, was: does Northstar's open grayness represent a threat to his standing as a super hero?

RR: Well, of course not. But if he did want to change, with just a few adjustments to his basic genetic structure I could provide him with any color hair he could possibly want, and perhaps even give him the ability to change it at will. It wouldn't be a problem at all, compared with changing things like his ...

MYIR: Thank you, Dr. Richards.

MARVEL 2099.

A look at what you won't be seeing in the future

It was a relatively gorgeous September day in Manhattan as we approached the Empire Szechuan Chinese restaurant for lunch. The sun was spilling through the concrete canyons and no one in sight was lying on the street, vomiting yesterday's misery onto today's sidewalks. Appropriate, then, that we were snackin' with Marvel's Man of Tomorrow, 2099 Editor Joey Cavalieri.

Joey seemed tense as he dipped his vegetable dumplings in soy sauce. The man was under a lot of pressure. Marvel's newest line of titles — four books set in the Marvel Universe future — were declared winners before they even came out. That can build expectations. Joey is not a man who likes things expected of him. He is a Manhattanite to the core, which means that fear is his guiding light. For a Woodyesque survivor of the urban jungle like Joey, expectations simply lead to disappointments.

I asked Joey what's in store for the future of 2099. (Get it? The future of ...) He hemmed. He hawed. He fidgeted. Joey is a well-trained Marvel editor. "I'm not at liberty to say," he finally replied, eyes darting desperately for some help — a drink of water — anything.

"This isn't a Senate subcommittee hearing," I reminded him, smirking an arrogant smirk. "I'm just curious as to what new 2099 books you have coming up."

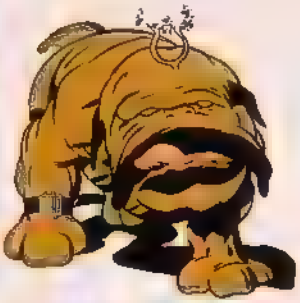
"Well, I can tell you about the 2099 books we've pretty much ruled out," he blurted, hoping I would take the bait.

How could I resist? "This I *have* to hear," I lied. Of course, it was actually a lie within a lie — the truth is, I'm as curious as the next person about the inner workings of Marvel's publishing schedule. Even if the next person were a graduate of the Fred MacMurray Academy of Excitement.

Okay, I said a now-animated Joey. He was in his element. He was ready to do shtick. There are some real *wonks*.

He talked. And talked some more. Talked right through the check. Talked right through *Marvel Year In Review* picking up the check.

I'll be merciful and give you the *TV Guide* version. 2099 titles you mercifully *won't* be seeing anytime in the future:



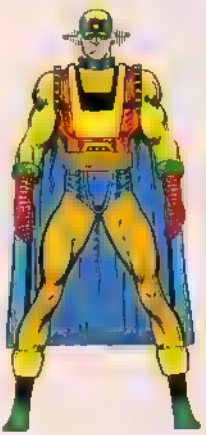
LOCKJAW 2099

• LOCHJAW: 2099 •

The adventures of the teleporting dog of the moon faring Inhumans. A hundred years in the future, a tree does not grow in Brooklyn. Or anywhere else, for that matter. Luckily, Lockjaw can teleport, so in each scintillating issue he'll continue his desperate, planet-spanning search for that one chance at relief.

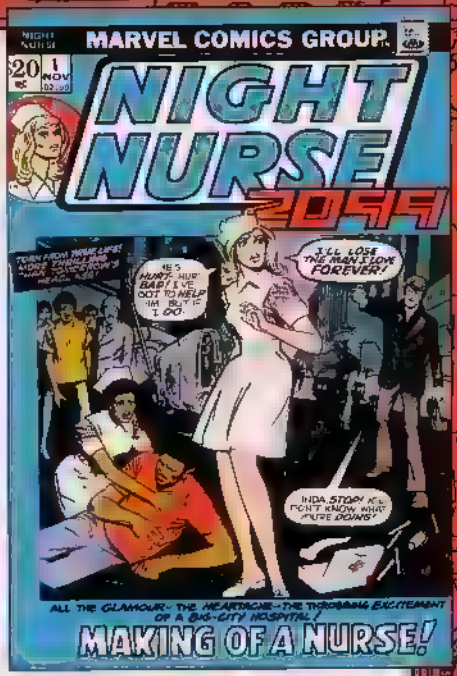
• CAPTAIN ULTRA: 2099 •

Basically, the premise involves the Captain Ultra armor and mantle being passed down to his great grandson, Morty, who was expected to carry on the family tradition of being a lame, unusable character. Obviously, fashion- and color-blindness run in the family.



• NIGHT NURSE: 2099 •

The adventures of Linda Carter (no, not the actress, the comic book star) registered nurse of the future. She has no powers, no artificial enhancements, she's not a ninja or a vengeance-crazed assassin — she's just a nurse! You wanna talk high concept, she's a nurse.

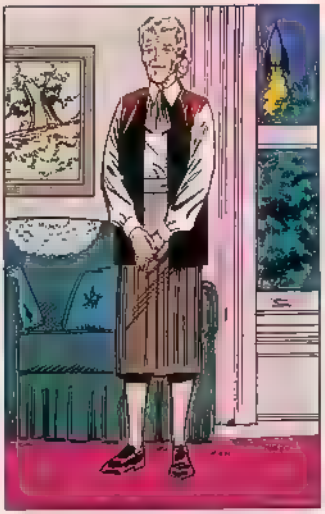

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
NIGHT NURSE 2099
ALL THE GLAMOUR - THE HEARTACHE - THE THROBBING EXCITEMENT OF A BIG-CITY HOSPITAL!
MAKING OF A NURSE!

• SQUIRREL GIRL, 2099 •

The fun-loving mutant rodent teen (and let's face it, a squirrel ain't nothin' but a rat with a fluffy tail) finds that she accidentally hibernated for over a hundred years! What a crazy nut! Can she survive in the far-flung future? Will buckteeth be in with the squirrels of 2099? Just how good is she at chewing nuts? And why should anyone care?

• GOMI: 2099 •

The lobster-like genetic teen has been preserved for an entire century inside a big shellfish and in 2099 he dreams up to clean up crime with his double trouble, mighty mite obstacle partners Huey and Screwy. Dark and gritty actor the wait, the fans love it! Wait 'til you see those lobsters punch some serious butt!



• AUNT MAY-2099 •

What you thought she'd die?

Joey and I walked back to the office hungry already. Chinese food does that to you. I was tired. I was hurting. Joey seemed okay. He'd survived the lunch without falling into (m)any verbal traps.

All I could do was think about the implications of what we'd discussed. Joey had only told me what *wasn't* coming out next year in the 2099 line, and it was enough to set my stomach a-churning. Can you imagine what *was* be coming out?

Good thing we didn't eat Mexican.

—*Fabian Nicieza*

There Goes The Neighborhood

"Turn that danged cosmic atomizer down or I'm callin' the cops!"

The neighborhood meeting is in full swing as you enter the auditorium. Taking a seat in the back, you listen as the debate rages: "—and we don't need those people at all! They're loud, they're up all hours, they break things—"

"What about them putting something *positive* into the community?" a dissenter howls. "I was there when they moved into the Bronx, and it wasn't *all* bad. They—"

"The Bronx, what does it look like now, the Bronx?" an elderly gentleman disagrees. "If they want someplace new to brood and brawl, let 'em go back where they came from!"

"Where they *came* from, Pops, is a nuclear reactor," quips a stringy teen in a tie-dyed shirt. "Or a chemical spill, or some kind of freak accident."

"That's what I mean! Send 'em back to the waste dump, or the reactor, or wherever they had their whaddayacall'ems — origins! Sure! Ship 'em back to their origins! That's plenty fine for me!" pronounces the old man, to scattered applause.

As super heroes, super-related incidents, and the responses to same increase across the globe, scenes like the one above are being played out in more and more communities across the nation. Super heroes have always been a mobile bunch, but now that their living patterns have truly grown to reflect those of our new, mobile post-Baby Boom generation, more and more heroes are facing the difficulties of moving, both on a frequent and infrequent basis. Even the most famous have trouble coordinating relatively simple changes of address.

Take the Fantastic Four's move from the Baxter Building to their self-owned digs at Four Freedoms Plaza, mostly organized through the FF's longtime agents, Gribble & Co. "Frankly, the old landlord was not all that sad to see them leave," says company owner Xerxes Gribble. "Complaints from neighbors had always been a problem—noise, brownouts from Richards' experiments, small earthquakes followed by heat waves when the Thing and the Torch went at it—which could be pretty often."

Constructing their own high rise didn't solve all of the Fantastic Four's problems, however. "I hear they have trouble renting, even though they pay all the insurance," Gribble gossiped vitriolically. "In fact, now some of their original tenants are relocating. And moving all that equipment — sheesh! Even the crate-haulers had to be rocket scientists to keep from activating something. An entire crew just disappeared for almost a day and a half when somebody leaned against some doodad...oh, yeah, the, um, 'Negative Zone Portal Control Console' or some whatzis.

"But hey, at least we didn't pull a Damage Control like that Avengers debacle," he adds, referring to the 'accidental' dumping of Avengers Mansion into the Hudson River by the clumsy repair crew a while back. "That's the sort of goof that can take out a business the hard way."

One must picture having to inform a perturbed Ben Grimm of the demise of his favorite Rococo breakfront to fully appreciate the truth of Gribble's words.

Tough as it must be for well-known public heroes to move, we can only speculate on the difficulties for the loner or more infamous hero. What cheesy hotels, seedy YMCAs and forgotten trailer parks does Nomad call home on his endless vacation? Are there really enough good truck stops to satisfy the Hulk? And just what does the Punisher say to the neighbors. "Of course that's not my pile of corpses on your lawn, I don't know who left it there"? "I'm restoring an old engine, and it backfires every night, in rapid-fire succession"?

Here's hoping you and yours never have to find out. Me? I'm moving.

— Bob Washington

Top Ten Worst Heroes To Live Next To — And Why

#10 BLACK BOLT. Forget the stereo — make sure *he's* quiet. Just stay on his good side. One harsh word from him can have serious ramifications.

#9 THE HULK. Face it — anybody this size is just a bad idea to live next to. And you never know when your new grass fertilizer might stir up those pesky "smash puny human" ideas.

#8 THE PUNISHER. For obvious reasons (see article).

#7 GHOST RIDER. Who knows *what* has to be done to repair a spectral motorcycle? Or to *fuel* it, for that matter? You probably don't want to know.

#6 ANY MEMBER OF ANY X-TEAM. These people get together so often, nobody knows who's in *what* anymore. Add to that the fact that several of the groups frequently feud — using lightning, plasma blasts and mind control — and you've got the Party Neighbors From Hell, dude.

#5 FOOLKILLER. This guy has only one solution to every problem — burn it. We think it best if *you* keep *your* stereo down for *him*.

#4 MORBIUS THE LIVING VAMPIRE. A real ugly work need we say more? Besides, we're allergic to grave mold.

#3 THE NEW WARRIORS. Kids today — it's all just loud rock & roll, and party, party, party. You don't need that. Also, given their whiny Politically-Correct-ism, we get the feeling it would quickly become a "Recycle . . . Or ELSE!!" neighborhood.

#2 MAN-THING. As if plumbing problems and potential vermin nesting sites weren't already enough of a problem, what with Our Nation's Crumbling Infrastructure.

#1 THE BLOB. Your yard: knee-deep in pizza boxes. Rolls of flab encroaching over your property line. On hot days, body odor with an effective radius of six miles. Also, gastro-intestinal idiosyncrasies of which the less spoken, the better.

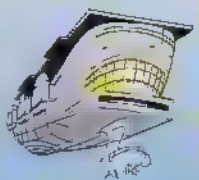
... And The Ten We'd Mind The Least

BUCKY, SEBASTIAN SHAW, CAPTAIN MARVEL, CYPHER, ET AL. If you've gotta have 'em we figure, the quieter the better. Besides, all things considered, you're *still* taking your chances.

STORM. Because it's always a beautiful day in her neighborhood, except when she's a bit . . . cranky.

WOLVERINE. But only if he'll let you borrow those crazy lawn tools, Daddy-O.

DAMAGE CONTROL. At least these guys can clean up after themselves.



NICK FURY. Hey, any time the big guy wants to hover over *us* at near-satellite altitudes, he's more than welcome.

EXCALIBUR. From what we hear, they're hardly ever in this dimension anyway.

THE WASP. Actually, she's just on this list because we wish *we* could afford to live in *her* neighborhood.

THE PUNISHER. Yeah, we know what we said earlier. At least the neighborhood would be safe.

JAMIE MADROX. The ultimate helpful hand, from moving in to repainting. Just make sure he reassembles himself *before* the pizzas arrive.

DEATHLOK. A nice, quiet family man. And that "No Killing" thing can't be all bad, especially if you have "friendly" pets.

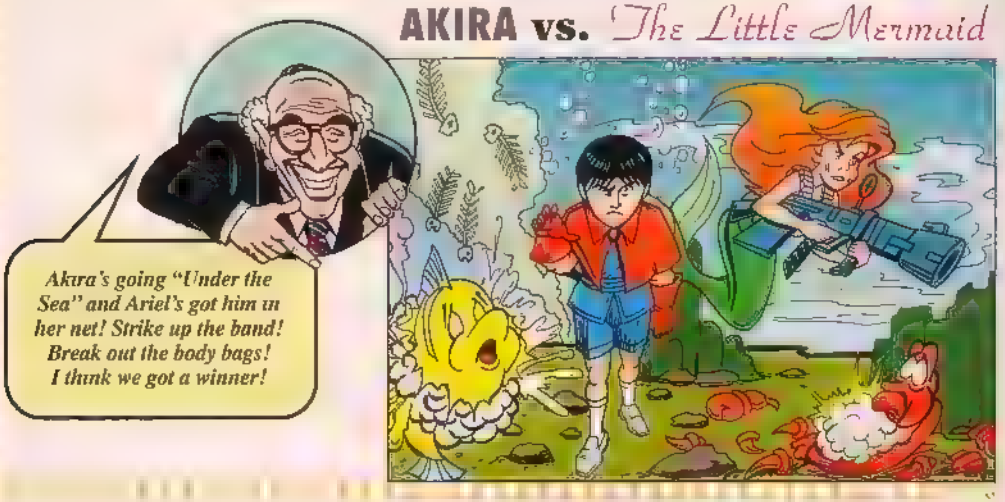
Sid Lefkowitz's

Mighty Marvel Matchups!

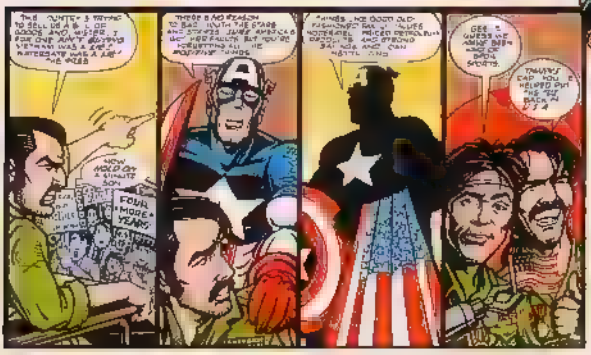
As Reported by Ken Levine and Marc Sumerak

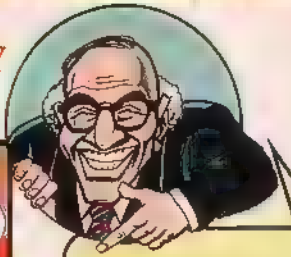
After *Batman vs. Predator* became such a huge hit for the competition, Marvel Vice President of Mondo Moneymaking, Sid Lefkowitz decided that we should get a piece of the movie tie-in pie. Not only that, he also decided that he would create and write all of the new titles himself. Let's take a look at his work in progress.

AKIRA vs. *The Little Mermaid*



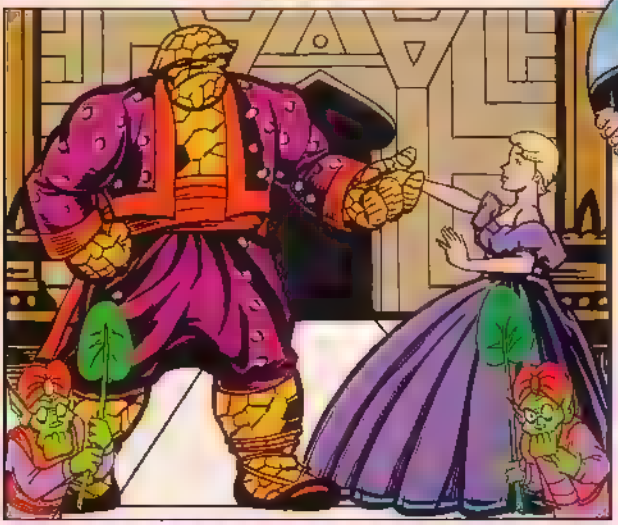
Born on The Fourth of July vs. Captain America


FOUR MORE YEARS!
THERE'S NO REASON TO BAD MOUTH THE STARS AND STRIPES, JAMES. AMERICA HAS HER FAULTS BUT YOU'RE FORGETTING ALL THE INSPIRING THINGS.
THANKS, HE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED RAH-RAH SPEECH NOTWITHSTANDING, MIXED METAPHORS AND STRONG BAD MOJO AND OTHER WEIRD SHIT.
GEE, I GUESS WE ARMED BOTH SIDES.
THANKS, DAD. YOU HELPED PUT THE FUN BACK IN U.S.A.



Down on America? Ashamed of the Red, White and Blue? Not if the Sentinel of Liberty's got something to say about it! Watch the Star-Spangled Avenger take on a whole crowd of party-pooping Vietnam Vets in pulse-pounding oral debate! God Bless America! On sale in September!

The THING And I



A lighthearted musical romp starring the ever-lovin' Thing! Watch the rocky, orange behemoth sing and dance like he's never sung or danced before! Complete with flexidisc featuring the hit songs "(Don't You Know) It's Clobberin' Time" and "Fancy Feet on Yancy Street"! Call Dick Clark! We got ourselves a musical masterpiece!

Ghost Rider vs. GHOST

Ghostie's back and he's skull over boots in love! Headbreak meets heartbreak in this gut-wrenching, senses-shattering extravaganza! The Spirit of Vengeance may send his enemies straight to Hell, but when the lights go down, he'll be knock-knock-knockin' on Heaven's door!

Anthony Stark Finally Dead

Stark Enterprises physician wins $1.2 million

Multimillionaire industrialist Anthony "Tony" Stark died Saturday, July 11 at St. Matthews hospital in Palo Alto, California after an extended bout with an unidentified degenerative nerve disease. Stark's demise brings to an end not only the career of one of the world's foremost scientists and philanthropists, but also an ongoing and highly secretive betting pool among the employees of Stark Enterprises.

"It started out as kind of a joke, when Tony began having palpitations right after beating his alcohol problem," admitted former Stark pilot and current Stark Enterprises V.P. of Operations James Rhodes. "This was after years of fainting spells and heart attacks. I remember saying, 'The boss is a tough old bird. I bet he eventually dies of old age.' And then someone chimed in, 'I'll take that bet!'

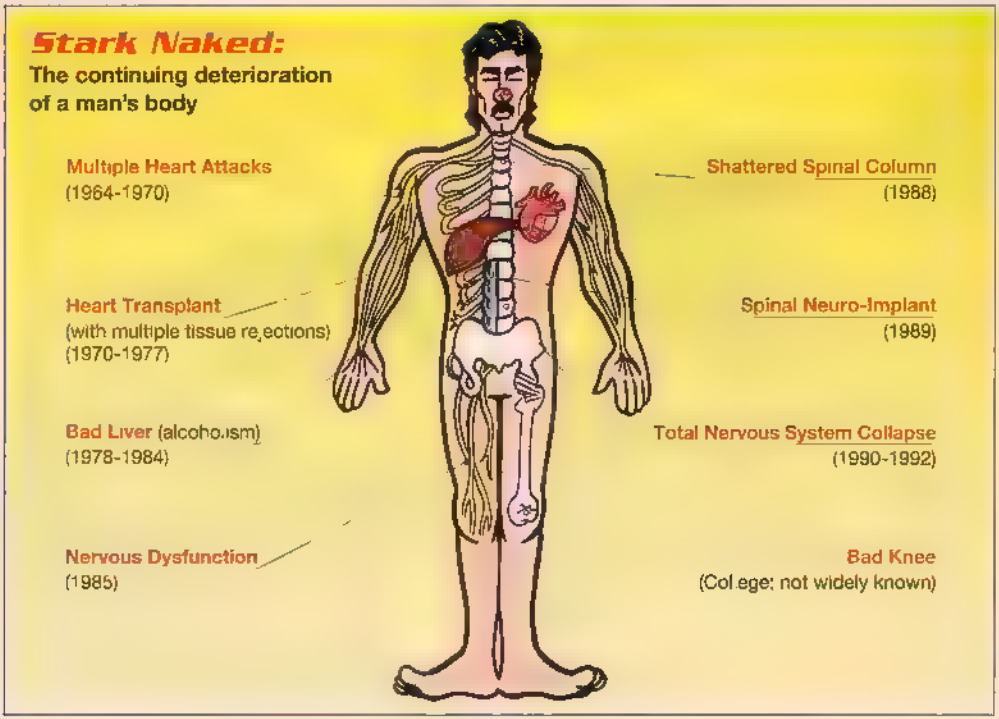
"Before we knew it, most of the company had put down money on the cause of Mr. Stark's eventual death, and the jackpot had swelled to over a million dollars. In fact, I figured that was why Tony was always being attacked — the guys who had bet on 'decapitation' or 'blasted by high-powered argon laser' were probably trying to rig the contest."

"I'da swore the smart money was on a brain tumor!" exclaimed former Stark employee Harry "Happy" Hogan. "He was always keelin' over and actin' peculiar. I read all about them things in some magazine. I figured it *hadda* be! Now my best friend is dead *an* I'm out fifty bucks."

The jackpot of $1.2 million was claimed by Dr. Abner Sedjwick, a staff physician with Stark Enterprises for several years, whose guess of "nervous breakdown" was judged close enough by lottery officials.

"I know my nervous system, and it was as plain as pie that that was what was going to do it," said Sedjwick, who intends to relocate to Hawaii and retire on his winnings. "Though it *was* touch-and-go for a while there when Mr. Stark got himself shot. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to send my boy to college. But Mr. Stark held on, bless him, until he could go out right and proper. I hate to see a man die, hippocratic oath and all that, but if he had to go, at least some good came of it."

Tom Brevoort and Mike Kanterovich



Speculation and Medication

We asked Stark Enterprises staff physician and lottery winner Dr. Abner Sedwick to speculate: Had Tony Stark lived, what medical conditions would he have been likely to contract next? We also asked Dr. Sedwick what Stark's response to these problems would probably be and what side benefits such solutions might have. His educated guesses are as follows:

Condition	Odds	Stark's Response	Benefit
TENNIS ELBOW	1-1	Cybernetic joint replacement	Improved serve
MALIGNANT BRAIN TUMOR	2-1	Download personality into computer terminal	Gives "personal computer" a whole new meaning
SWOLLEN ANKLES	3-1	Hire "mobility consultant" to carry him around	Eases unemployment by creating new jobs
KIDNEY FAILURE	4-1	Wage "Kidney Wars" against corporate rivals	Excuse for guest appearance by Ant-Man
HEARTBREAK OF PSORIASIS	5-1	Skin grafts from Stark Enterprises employees	Fosters feelings of togetherness among SE staff
RECTAL CANCER	6-1	Auxiliary waste removal system installed under left armpit	Saves toilet paper
BAD BREATH	7-1	Proper oral hygiene	Happier teeth and gums
GIGANTISM	8-1	Prime the public for such grotesque mutations by promoting Cable as a hero	Improved human/mutant relations
ATHLETE'S FOOT	10-1	Radiation therapy	Ambient glow cuts electric bill by 17%
INSOMNIA	11-1	Generate soothing alpha rhythms to aid sleep	Perfect pitch
ARTHRITIS	12-1	Conduct day-to-day business via remote uplink to Stark LMD	No visible tan lines
PAINFUL ITCHING AND SWELLING	14-1	Start a new dance craze, "The Twitch"	Two gold records and a Grammy nomination for Best Video
ANEMIA	15-1	Contract vampirism	Now lives up to reputation as "Ladykiller"
DISLOCATED SPLEEN	17-1	Spend $8 billion developing artificial spleen	Open show of support from spleen lovers everywhere
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS	20-1	Hostile takeover of own nervous system	Takes stock of self, stock doubles, then splits
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE	27-1	Miniaturized prompter on inner eyelid	Vast marketing potential to talk-show circuit and to politicians
SCOLIOSIS	32-1	Powerful like-charged magnets implanted in head and feet	Will never get lost while camping again
CLOGGED ARTERIES	48-1	Introduce nanute "scrubbing bubbles" into bloodstream	A clean, fresh feeling every time he bleeds

Noted Industry Expert Shows You How To:

SELL YOUR SOUL FOR FUN AND PROFIT!

Friend — is your life boring? Are you stuck in a dead-end job? No money, no girlfriend, super-villains destroying your apartment every other day? Then just send for Michael Dumas's new book "THE SOUL AWAY PLAN FOR FAME AND FORTUNE" and you too can learn how to sell your soul for temporal power and material wealth beyond your wildest dreams. Michael's book answers such commonly-asked questions as:

"How much is my soul really worth?"

Different souls have varying degrees of value. A soul like Captain America's would be considered blue chip, while a soul like the Punisher's would be considered high risk at best. Of course, the higher the risk the soul, the lower the yield (since most demons figure they'll get the soul eventually anyway). Luckily, it's always a seller's market in the soul business, so even the most contemptible human being can get a pretty good deal.

"What about the afterlife? Won't I be doomed for all eternity?"

That's a common misconception. Hell has received a lot of bad PR over the years. It's really not much worse than Detroit. Besides, the ambitious soul has plenty of opportunities for travel and advancement. You could be sent back to Earth to serve a black magician, haunt a castle or, if you're a *real* player, become a demon yourself! In fact, some of our best clients are mortal men are now some of our best clients on the Other Side.

"So why should I go through a recognized soul brokerage firm like your company, HELLBROKER INC?"

For years, people have dabbled in selling their own souls, but the results are almost always tragic. Stories abound regarding amateur soul-traders who now spend eternity as a sentient fungus or a toll collector at the Lincoln Tunnel. Who needs the grief? At HELLBROKER, INC we have a qualified staff who know the demons they're dealing with. And we *always* read the fine print on any contract. Like a qualified real estate agent or stockbroker, we're out there to find the best deal for you — whether it's with Mephisto, Lord of the Netherworld, or just the minor demonic entity next door.

"I like what I hear. But you guys deal with demons. How do I know you're on the level?"

Our reputation speaks for itself — but you don't have to take it from us. Check out these quotes from just a few of our thousands of satisfied customers:

"Dumas helped me sell my soul to not just one but two demonic entities. He is at the top of my list!"

— Baron Mordo
Black Magician
and Ex-World Ruler

"If anyone knows the true face of evil, it's Michael Dumas!"

Dr. Stephen Strange
Ex-Sorceror Supreme, Earth

"The mortal worm has earned my attention—and my wrath. When the time comes, Michael Dumas will be dealt with."

Mephisto
All-Time Champion
Soul Accumulator

Intrigued? Who *wouldn't* be? So call **1-555-INFERNO** right now, and get what's coming to you. Plus, if you order now, you'll receive a special, added bonus: Michael Dumas's first bestseller, "HOW TO LURK WITH THE DEMONS WITHOUT GETTING YOUR BUTT BURNED".

It's yours free if you order before All Hallow's Eve. So dial our toll-free number, get both books for free, and get ready for the deal of your life! Remember, there's no obligation and nothing further to buy while you're still human. Don't delay! Order today!

HELLBROKER Inc.

When Michael Dumas talks,
Dormammu listens.

Classifieds

LOST AND FOUND

FOUND: Large, high-tech object marked "EMERGENCY BACK-UP MISSILE CLAS (rest of text obscured by object's being imbedded in building wall) in Kree. It crashed into our office some time back and became a conversation piece, but started beeping three days ago and now occasionally emits a high-pitched siren-like wail. Any qualified superhuman, unpowered hero, or guy in a Spandex suit is welcome. No exchange of money involved — just GET THIS THING OUT OF HERE!! Damage Control is booked solid for the next eight months! Klotnitz & Assoc. Suite 20, Hergenberger Building, Manhattan.

FOUND: Everything you ever lost. And everything anybody else ever lost. I'm a minor embodiment of a cosmic principle who until recently looked over everything in the universe anybody ever forgot where they put. Recent cosmos-shattering events have opened my pocket dimension to yours for the first time ever, and boy, is this place full!! Selling off the more interesting items at well below wholesale to highest bidder just for couch space! All-too-small catalog available from: Mundano, Guardian of Lost Stuff, Pocket Dimension of Lint, MYIR Box 53

SITUATIONS/MERCHANDISE WANTED

WE ARE THE ULTIMATE Refuse Collection Service. Immediate pick-up and disposal to the planet or dimension of your choice. Call **1-555-GATE**way (toll-free to Australia). Please hurry — I've been out of work for a while and my last job left me with big-time medical bills.

HUMAN BILLBOARD available nationwide on hourly basis. Let a 30-foot man (or taller — your option, slight extra charge) advertise your business or service via T-shirt or sandwich board. To say I'll give you a high profile is an understatement! Call 1-555-GOLIath.

TOP-LEVEL CEO

abandoned by multi-billion-dollar company after taking it to the top, seeks new employ. Experienced in several industries, extremely familiar with those "hush hush" hardball strategies required to get the job done. If no executive level openings, have hands-on experience in dry cleaning (all phases). Contact W. Fisk, Track 12, Penn Station, NYC.

HELP! My *&$#@! shoes smell bloody awful! Don't get &#@!# wise — I'm on my ^@#&!% feet and running most all %!@&# day. What d'yer *@#$&% American &#@!$* bloody longjohn types do about it and can you get the *#@!$& stuff in &#@!@$ England? H. Davis (If you call me 'Motormouth' agin I'll *&#@ yer &$#@! @$$!), MYIR Box 38 *(NOTE: [word] removed by editors)*

WANTED: Discreet storage/warehouse space. Not too many questions, must not have a problem with noise or occasional gunplay/explosions (will pay for damages). Please call or leave message at: **555-FRANk.**

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Infinity War "MY EVIL TWIN DID IT" T-shirts. Specify S, M, L, XL, or Galactus-size. $14.95 to: MYIR Box 25.

FOR SALE

BIG SALE — Large number of pure white leotards that miraculously provide excellent night camouflage (no, I don't understand it either, but trust me) — ready-to-dye or ready-to-wear for White Tiger, Dagger, others w/light alterations. Matching cloaks w/cowl and equipment available. They're perfectly good — I just have a new tailor. Contact Marc Spector, (212) 555-LUNAtic.

WE ARE NOT ALONE. WE MAY NOT EVEN BE FASHIONABLE. But you can be (the height of fashion, that is) in these wild and impressively outré-styled full-dress and combat uniforms legally confiscated from KREE and SHI'AR combat units after Operation: Galactic Storm. All suits conform well to standard Earth human sizes (many big and tall, petite and small fashions available — they're big empires) and have had all weapon components removed by experts (sorry, would-be Mad Thinkers?!). Catalog and order form from: O'Freebish Clothiers, MYIR Box 39

NOW AVAILABLE: "Nomad's Guide to Traveling the USA," a quarterly self-published magazine giving complete ratings and reviews of restaurants, sightseeing, local super-villains. Year's subscription includes complete collection of all back issues. I figure if Rick Jones can make a buck, why not me? At least I grew out of my 'sidekick' phase. $38.00/1st year, $18.00/year after, to: MYIR Box 42

HELP WANTED

WANTED: PSYCHICS, PSYCHICS, PSYCHICS! Also sorcerers, mages, and people with solid security/military experience — combinations of above a plus. Extensive, all-expenses paid travel a must — see the world (and more!). Yes, we're serious — are you? Resumés and sample spells to:
MysTECH Corp, MYIR Box 20

WANTED: SUPER MECHANICS. Sure, you can change a tire or a transmission, but can you recalibrate the spring retractors on a set of front-mounted .50 cals without blowing your arm off? Or deguass the Field Wave Modulator on a Stark 5000? Top-notch firm servicing FF, Avengers East and West, S.H.I.E.L.D. and others seeks certified mechanics with extensive or unusual experience to check the oil and rotate the tires of Earth's Greatest and Mightiest. Appear in person, M-F 12-4 at Billybob McJimmyjoe's Institute of High-Powered Auto Repair for informal oral and field examinations. 555-SPAReparts.

UNSQUEAMISH OFFICE HELP WANTED. Extremely off-the-wall security firm seeks part-time lite office help. Bookkeeping, travel arrangements, lite courier and correspondence, no filing, occasional assistance in séances and Mystic Rites of Warding. Must not be easily panicked; interest in New Age, Chthon, Dormammu, Varnae, etc. a +. Call (212) 555-KING or FAX resumé to 555-NIGHtstalkers.

MYSTERIOUS SURGE IN MY BUSINESS forces me to seek back-up. Extremely experienced Military, Intelligence, or Superhuman field workers and 'wet-workers' needed, paranormal/mutant abilities a plus. Travel, medical, dental yes; life or liability insurance no. Apply in person between 2-5 PM at *Sable, Inc.*, New York, NY. Drug-, Typing-, and Dodging-Giant-Robot Tests will be administered; please come prepared.

PERSONALS

TALK LIVE with a real super-villainess! 1-555-WHITequeen. Have your credit card number and next of kin info ready.

LONELY, incarcerated SWF seeks correspondence with nice guys on the outside. I'm in solitary confinement because I'm more woman than 'they' can handle, so I'm very much in need of comfort, both now and when I get out. Send replies and photo to: Briquette (no, not 'Bridget'), #77532, The Vault, c/o MYIR Box 27

Extremely self-made SWM seeks a babe who doesn't mind a little weirdness or night work. I get a little crazy and sometimes come undone, but I always get it all back together eventually. Let me "fall to pieces" over you. Sincere replies only to: Terror, Inc. (my friends call me 'Terry'), MYIR Box 37

OK, WHO'S THE WISE GUY(S)? Will the being or beings responsible for the sleek, high-tech craft that "buzzed" Prospect Park, Brooklyn 10/29/92 10:15 a.m. please contact me regarding their insurance policies — your force field shorted out my laptop and blew my Porsche's engine. I know who it was, because I saw one of your members through the cockpit window. C'mon, you guys, I'm serious. Ralph K. , MYIR Box 23

11/14/92 Junction Blvd. Subway stop 2:41 a.m. YOU: Pale long-haired rocker in costume w/fangs. ME: Blond punker w/'VARNAE ROCKS' T-shirt and leather jacket. You called me a vapid, spoiled child who understood nothing of the dark side, got tired of the wait for the train, and flew off into the night on velvet wings. Come back to me, my pasty-faced, high-cheeked prince. Elsa, (212) 555-2738.

MISCELLANEOUS

VOCAL INSTRUCTION—

Let me show you how to give your voice real power. B. Bolt, 555-BLUMoon (call collect — it's extremely long distance).

CASTING CALL — Need all types. Some travel involved, all expenses paid. Extremely exclusive, long-term contracts. 555-MOJO

WERE YOU BORN with the ability to make others itch at a distance at will? Exposed to toxic waste and now find yourself able to mystically make change for any bill? We all have powers as silly as that and sillier — and we walk proud. You can, too.
Call 555-SPAFON. Because We Care.

The Ultimate in Martial Arts/Physical Fitness training now available to the public. *Beef It Up, Buff It Up, Blow It Up with Cable*, an 18-hour video on one cassette by the Big Man himself (we don't know how he did it either) is the core of the new MagnumMuscle Weight Training system, employing an oversized, 140-pound fully automatic weapon in a series of grueling barbell exercises and skeet-shooting routines. Combine your quest for maximum size and definition with basic riflery and sharpshooting — the hot new fitness crazes that are taking the country by storm! Free brochure from: **STEROIDS 'R' US** , MYIR Box 78

Retirement Can Be Murder

What's a Kingpin to do with his Golden Years?

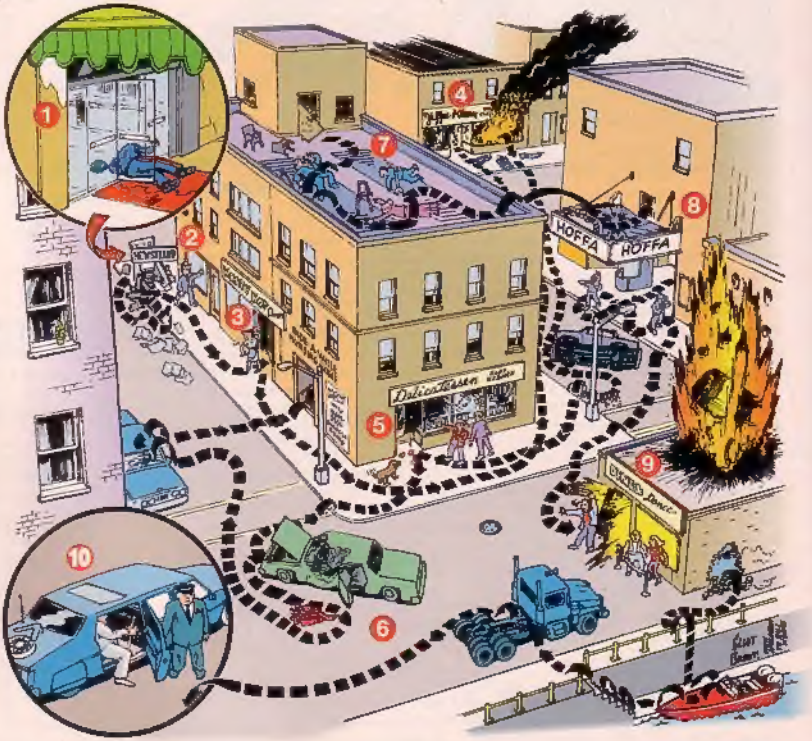
You know the scenario: A busy executive retires, and all of a sudden his life — once full of authority and schedules and appointments and an eager staff ready to take and carry out orders — is now full of a whole lot of nothing. For many retirees, it's hard to make that transition. All of which makes us think of Wilson Fisk, self-proclaimed "humble dealer in spices" but widely-renowned as the recently-deposed Kingpin of Crime. What's ol' Willie been up to?

Naturally, we can't ask him, since the Kingpin vanished shortly after being indicted by the grand jury. But we did the next best thing — we located a certain Mr. M, who used to be *this* close to the Kingpin, and asked him how the esteemed Mr. Fisk might be spending his days these days. "It's hard to say," Mr. M noted, speaking on conditions of strict anonymity. "When the boss was on top of his form, he had confidence, style — he was restrained, you know? He'd never have a guy's legs busted when a withering glance would do. And he was the guy for the withering glances, lemme tell ya. I remember a time — ah, but that guy's still in office, so maybe I shouldn't oughta tell that story."

Mr. M shrugs. "Anyway, when it started slippin' away from him, he got a little wild. Wanted it back, you know? So some jerk reporter looks cross-eyed at him, and all of a sudden the boss is tellin' me to have the guy's kid crippled? Or a waiter says the wrong thing, I gotta skronk on his hand? If that's how you deal with the small stuff, what are you gonna do when the big stuff happens? That's when I knew it was time to get out."

We asked Mr. M to speculate, to use what he knows about his former employer and take us through a day of the ex-Kingpin's life. "What, you mean guess? Sure, sure. I'm just so used to *not* knowin' the stuff I *do* know, it's a little funny to be spoutin' out what I don't know for sure. But hey, the check's good, right?"

It certainly is. So come with us now to the small retirement community of Coral Grove, Florida, for a day in the life of Wilson Fisk, typical retiree ...



1 7:30 AM: Doorman at building calls him "Mr. Fisher" again; removes four of doorman's molars with rusty pliers.

2 7:55 AM: Local newspaper has dropped *Calvin & Hobbes*; throws entire newsstand into traffic. "The boss always liked to start off the day with a laugh," says Mr. M. "He could get pretty cranky otherwise."

3 8:10 AM: Breakfast orange juice has pits; forces them into waitress's sinuses.

4 9:45 AM: Picks up laundry, too much starch in shirts; firebombs dry-cleaners. "With a neck like that, he's really a no-starch kind of guy."

5 12:35 PM: Gets mayonnaise instead of mustard on pastrami at deli; runs counter clerk through meat-slicer. "The boss *hates* mayo."

6 2:20 PM: Car doesn't stop for him at crosswalk; rips out engine and beats driver to death with it.

7 3:40 PM: Other seniors don't let him win at shuffleboard; jams pucks down their throats.

8 7:20 PM: Teenagers won't stop talking during Bargain Nite showing of *Hoffa*; crushes their larynxes. "Personally, I'm with him on that one."

9 11:30 PM: Can't sleep, goes to Dine & Dance on the waterfront and forcibly enters limbo contest; loses balance, knocks cappuccino maker through fusebox; resultant chain reaction causes boiler explosion. "The guy's death on ninjas, but when it comes to trippin' the light fantastic, well, who's gonna tell him he's got two left toes? Not me, pal."

10 12:05 AM: Leaves town. "A typical day? Yeah, I figure that's pretty much how it would end."

— Kurt Busiek and James Fry

The sun's rays are deadly...
BRAND X
SUNBLOCK 3000
... So don't let this happen to you.
Ultraviolet rays kill. If you don't believe us, just ask Nobel-Prize-winning scientist Dr. Michael Morbius. He unwisely chose our competitor's "tan-enhancing" suntan oil, and you can see what's happened to *him*.
To protect yourself from the screaming, unbearable agony of having your flesh seared, dessicated and scorched to the bone by solar radiation — you need SUNBLOCK 3000.
GURNEY & PANOSIAN

Athlete's Foot? Not a problem.

When the big guy needs foot care, he gets Professor Cole's Antiseptic Spray.

Because when you need relief, you need it fast. Especially if you've got "busy feet." Feet that are constantly on the go, stomping down steel doors, drop-kicking bad guys like the Abomination across the state, hefting your enormous frame across the skies in a series of unearthly leaps.

Feet like these need fast, guaranteed relief — or else. And we're not going to be the ones to let these feet down.